

Prayer Update From Israel (January 9, 2017)



Cloud over the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem
“Judah is a lion’s cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up!”
(Genesis 49:9a. See Torah Portion below)

1. THE MEETING OF THE “SEVENTY” NEXT SUNDAY IN PARIS—A SCRIPTURE STRATEGY FOR PRAYER.

The tenth chapter of the Book of Genesis enumerates 70 descendants of the sons of Noah after the Flood, each of whom was to become the ancestor of a nation. From ancient times, this “seventy” has in Hebrew thinking continued to be the number representing the nations of the world. In the course of time, God, drew from those nations (*goyim*) a man, one through whose seed He declared He would make yet another nation (*goy*), one separate from the Seventy. In fact, it would become a “great nation” (*goy gadol*; Genesis 12:2), in which families of every other nation on the face of the earth would find blessing! (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). Those who sought blessing for this *goy gadol*, this “seed of Abraham”, would themselves find blessing; those who sought to curse it would be cursing what God had Himself blessed, and would themselves fall under a curse.

Next Sunday January 15th, representatives of 70 nations are scheduled to be gathered in Paris for a conference (Israel will not be among them). This gathering is for the purpose of discussing and formulating a peace-plan regarding the future of the land, which the God of the universe declared to be the place where His special nation would settle forever. The conference has been planned for months. In light of recent international developments many questioned the necessity for it, even assuming it might be canceled. But, like last December 23rd’s UN Resolution 2334, the conference appears to have crawled back on to the table.

We sense that many do not realize the volatility of what is at issue, are unaware of the warfare taking place in the heavenlies, and what a victory by the powers of darkness at the meeting on May 15th may portend. ***Our God is not surprised; nor will He leave His people without direction!*** But it is a time to be sober-minded, alert and to seek His face.

Believing leaders in and outside of Israel are taking the Paris meetings very seriously. We submit for your prayerful consideration one call and prayer-strategy, released this past week by Rick Ridings of Succat Hallel (Tabernacle of Praise) in Jerusalem:

“17 days that may determine the direction of 2017 and beyond”

STRATEGIC SCRIPTURES FOR A STRATEGIC TIME FOR ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS THROUGH JANUARY 20TH

I have felt strongly in recent days that Satan might try to send a major Middle East war, or even World War III, out of the Lord's timing, in order to cut off a huge harvest in the Middle East and the nations. The urgency of this time period leading up to the major transition point of January 20th was underlined to me when I received the following prayer alert from my friend and colleague, Tomas Sandell, the Director of the European Coalition for Israel, entitled “17 Days that may determine the direction of 2017 and beyond”. I asked his permission to quote part of what he sent:

“As we prayed together at the ECI office in Helsinki today for the first time in 2017 the Lord suddenly gave a picture. I realized that the next 17 days ([from 3rd January to 20th January](#)) may define the direction of 2017 and the coming years in a very special way. [On Sunday 15th January](#) the international community, led by the outgoing Obama administration and the French government, is calling together 70 nations to an international peace conference to try to establish the parameters for a two state solution. The conference is a follow up from an earlier conference in Paris in the summer and builds on the recent UNSC resolution 2334 which outlaws Israeli settlements in the disputed territories.

This is an unprecedented move in international relations which is being planned (plotted) in clear opposition both to the Israeli government and the incoming US government. Many fear that the conference could lead to another UN Security Council resolution being issued between 15th and [20th January](#), which would further isolate, weaken and stigmatize Israel in the international community.”

If the above scenario were to come to pass, it could easily embolden terrorist groups or violent nations to take actions that could spark a regional or even world war. This is during a season where many sense a breakthrough for harvest coming upon the Middle East. I was recently speaking in mainland China to a group that is sending 500 missionaries into the Middle East this month!

Satan has tried to cut off a powerful missions movement in the past by using a world war. “The Student Volunteer Movement” born in 1886, was mightily used by the Lord to envision and send an unprecedented number of young missionaries from Germany, Great Britain, and the USA into unreached nations, especially those of the Far East. That missions movement was cut off by World War I, and the young men being sent from the three main sending nations, instead were sent into a war between those nations, and many died, and that missions movement came to an abrupt end.

For the sake of the harvest, the rising missions movement, and the Lord's purposes for Israel and the Middle East, I encourage you to proclaim the following Scriptures during your prayer (and any fasting to which the Lord may lead) at least until January 20th. I would encourage you to specifically proclaim them over former US President Jimmy Carter, President Obama, US Secretary of State Kerry, the US Department of State, French President Hollande, The International Criminal Court in the Hague, the United Nations Security Council, and the Foreign Ministry of Sweden (which will hold the rotating chairmanship of the UN Security Council during this month of January. The Swedish Foreign Minister, Margot Wallstrom, has shown an extreme bias against Israel):

Psalms 33:10-11

*The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Psalms 9:15-16

*The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.*

Job 5:12-16

*He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success.
He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.
Darkness comes upon them in the daytime; at noon they grope as in the night.
He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth; he saves them from the clutches of the powerful.
So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.*

Psalms 120 A song of ascents.

*I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me.
Save me, LORD, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues.
What will he do to you, and what more besides, you deceitful tongue?
He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows, with burning coals of the broom bush.
Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Kedar!
Too long have I lived among those who hate peace.
I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.*

Jeremiah 30:8

*“In that day,” declares the LORD Almighty {in this context, speaking of Israel},
“I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds;
no longer will foreigners enslave them.”*

Psalm 2

*Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,
“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”
The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.
He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”
I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me,
“You are my son; today I have become your father.
Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.
You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”
Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.
Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Thank you for your part in standing with us for Harvest in the Middle East.

Rick Ridings

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2. AN ATTACK OVERLOOKING JERUSALEM.

*“Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and
night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” (Jeremiah 9:1)*

*“Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with violent (Heb. hamas) hatred.
Guard my soul and deliver me...I take refuge in You” (Psalm 25:19-20).*

It was at the overlook from which Abraham first laid eyes on the place “afar off” where he would offer up his son Isaac (Genesis 22:4). It offers a spectacular panoramic view of Jerusalem; we have taken visitors there many times. Yesterday afternoon a bus arrived at the outlook, filled with young Israeli military cadets on a fieldtrip. They had only just disembarked and were standing near their bus when a truck roaring out of nowhere, smashing through the midst of the group; it then braked, and accelerated in reverse again over those who had fallen. Recovering from the shock, and realizing it was a terrorist, a guide and several soldiers fired into the truck killing the driver. Many will have seen the initial on-site video report sent out by Daniel and Amber Pierce yesterday evening. In the end, four young Israeli soldiers, one man, three women, lay dead: Erez Orbach (20); Shira Tzur (20), Shir Hajaj (22); Ya’el Yakutiel (20). They will be

buried today. Sixteen were injured, one, a female officer remains in a coma, fighting for her life. This morning, Israel is grieving, the pictures and stories of those murdered are on the front of all the papers (For English, please go to the following site:

<http://www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/0,2506,L-4904960,00.html>).

The assailant was 28 year Arab Fadi Al-Qunbar of east Jerusalem. He appears, at present, to have acted alone—inspired by inciting Jihadi material on the internet and in his education. The response of his sister, upon hearing of his death and the death of the four young Israeli soldiers, “Praise be to Allah that he became a martyr. It’s the most beautiful martyrdom.” In Gaza, Hamas operatives were filmed handing out sweets to children to celebrate.

Please Pray:

*** Life and recovery for those wounded in the attack. Pray for the presence of the Father of Mercies and God of All Comfort with those who are wounded, traumatized, in mourning in Zion. (II Cor. 1:3).**

*** That He will save His flock, and they shall no longer be a prey (Ezekiel 34:22). That God will redeem Israel out of all his troubles (Psalm 25:22). That she will become aware of Yeshua as the Redeemer in her midst.**

*** That the light of truth and life shine into the darkness of falsehood which binds the Muslim Arab community in Israel in a world of violence and death. Pray that Muslim Arabs in Jerusalem will awaken to and embrace the love of the God of Israel, who offers hope, peace and a future in harmony with their neighbors.**

3. A MENORAH—A KEY—and A CROSS!

Significant discoveries continue to come to light in Israel. That is, items whose unearthing may serve as a “sign” through which God is speaking regarding His people. We have written of some of these...the finding of a golden bell (worn by an ancient priest) on the ascent from the City of David to the Temple Mount; an ancient stone bearing the name “Judea”, inscribed shortly before that name was banned from the region by the Romans; a shard from the 2nd century bearing a call to “save Zion”; an ancient “seal” shaped as a menorah, used to certify bread as kosher (John 6, the great “Bread of Life” chapter, speaks of the Son of Man upon whom God the Father has “set His seal”). *This past Hanukah, three Israeli “spelunkers,” while exploring a cave in South-Central Israel, stumbled into a chamber, probably an ancient cistern, bearing remarkable engravings on the walls.* One was of a very large menorah. Archaeologists date it to sometime during the 2nd Temple period. In fact, the presence of three legs at its base suggests that it may actually depict the menorah in the Temple itself. Much has been made of the fact that this menorah, this “light-stand” was discovered during the Festival of Lights—a time when Jews light a special menorah to remember the rededication of that same Temple after it had been defiled.

Alongside the menorah were two other special engravings—that of a key, and that of a cross. It is interesting, the speculation the discovery of this menorah and cross side-by-side has triggered amongst the experts and in the media. Some have immediately assumed that the Jewish symbol must be much older, that the “Christian” surely would have had to be made centuries later during the Byzantine period. But others have suggested that they may indeed have been made during the same period, perhaps by the same person. Perhaps it was a Christian who had converted to Judaism, mused one. Or (unusual to see considered in Israel), one writer we read in a secular paper actually put out the possibility that the artist might have been a Jewish person who *also* believed in Jesus (Yeshua). In other words, what we would today call a Messianic Jew! After all, there were thousands who came to faith in Yeshua as Messiah and Savior in Israel, while the Temple was still standing (3000 in one day as recorded in Acts 2:41).

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For Israelis to become aware that the *Key* which is missing to their faith is the *Cross*—the Living Light who died on it—and rose again!**

*** Awareness that before God there is no contradiction between a Jew who believes the Hebrew Scriptures and who also trusts in the sacrificial, atoning death of the Servant prophesied in Isaiah 53.**

*** Awareness that “Messianic Jew” is not a new phenomenon, but one which has been from the beginning when Messiah first lived and moved among us.**

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parashah) from the first five books of Moses (The Torah) and an ending (Haftarah) from the Prophets read on the Sabbath in synagogues around the world. This portion is given a Hebrew name drawn from the opening words of the Torah passage. An illustration of this practice appears to have been recorded in Luke 4:16 where Yeshua (Jesus) arrived in the synagogue in Nazareth and was asked to read the portion (Isaiah 61) from the Prophets. We have found that in perusing these weekly readings, not only are we provided opportunity to identify in the context of God’s Word with millions of Jewish people around the world, but very often the Holy Spirit will illumine specific passages pertinent that week in our intercession for the Land and people of Israel. All texts are those of English translations of the Scriptures.

The readings for this week 8-14 January 2017 are called *VaYechi*— “And [Jacob] Lived”:

TORAH: Genesis 47:28—50:26

HAFTARAH: I Kings 2:1-12

This week’s readings bring us to the end of the Book of Genesis.

They encompass the last seventeen years of Jacob's life in Egypt, his blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, his final prophetic Word over his twelve sons, his death, the return of his body to Hebron for burial, and the life of Joseph in Egypt until his death there at the age of 110.

***Genesis 47:29.** *“Now if I have found favor in your sight, please...deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.”* We have noticed in how many ways Joseph presents a picture of the coming Savior, Yeshua. Here Jacob requests of him to “deal kindly and truly with me” and “carry me out of Egypt to lie with my fathers”. As we have mentioned before, the words “kindly” and “truly” are *chesed* and *emet*—two words we have seen and shall see together often in the Torah. John 1:16-17 tells us, *“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the Torah was given through Moses, but lovingkindness and truth* (Modern Hebrew translation: *chesed v'emet*) *came through Yeshua the Messiah.”* As Joseph would in kindness and truth be faithful to take his father out of Egypt and to the Promised Land where his fathers were buried, so Yeshua carries those who entrust themselves to his *chesed and emet* out of the bondage of death and into the presence of His Father and the resting place of those who have gone before!

***Genesis 47:31b** (NASB). *“Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed.”* The Hebrew word for “bed” (*mita*) bears the same letters as the word for “staff” (*mateh*). The translators of the Greek *Septuagint* used in New Testament times (translated several hundred years earlier), chose the meaning “staff” here. This evidently is what is referred to in the New Covenant Scripture **Hebrews 11:21**, *“By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.”* What is clear is that Jacob had become strong in worship and in faith (notice his attributions to God in 48:3; 48:9,11, 15-16; 48:20-21), and it was this which enabled him to deliver in holy authority the prophetic utterances of chapter 49.

***Genesis 48:5.** *“And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.”* In fact, because of Reuben's sin against his father (see I Chronicles 5:1-2), his birthright was transferred to Joseph, the first-born of Rachel, and thence to his two sons. Of these two sons, already here, even before Jacob delivers his blessing, Ephraim is named first. In the future his name would at times be used as a synonym for Israel, *“For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my First Born”* (Jeremiah 31:9).

***Genesis 48:7** (ESV). *“As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way [from Bethel] to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).* In this brief mention of Rachel's death, one senses the tenderness which Jacob still felt for her over forty years after her death (49:31 may show an affection which had also grown for Leah). As has been mentioned, this passage, along with 35:19 and I Samuel 10:2, also point towards the location of Rachel's tomb as being in the area of Benjamin (just northwest of Jerusalem) rather than southward, adjacent to Bethlehem as is held by Rabbinic tradition.

***Genesis 48:20.** *“By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’”* This blessing is still spoken today by a father over his sons in many Jewish households on Friday evenings before the *Erev-Shabbat* meal.

***Genesis 48:21** (ESV). *“Then Israel said to Joseph, ‘Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers.’”* “God will be with you!” Jacob had come to know and trust in *Imannu-El*.—the “With-Us God”. God had promised this to Jacob at Bethel (*“Behold, I am with you and will guard you wherever you go...for I will not leave you...”* 28:15), where Jacob promised that if He would be “with him” and guard him, and bring him back safely, he YHVH would be his God. There were many other times within his long life when he would be reminded of God’s presence with him (Genesis 31:3; 31:42; 32:24,28; 35:13). At Beersheba, where Jacob offered sacrifices before going down to Egypt, God again spoke to him, *“I will go down with you to Egypt...”* (Genesis 46:4).

***Genesis 48:22.** *Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.”* If the last part of these verses refers to an actual battle in which Jacob took part, it is not recorded in Scripture (Might Jacob have yielded up his weapons as a sign of peace, when purchasing the land in 33:19—a peace later violated by Simeon and Levi?). The Hebrew for this passage contains obscurities which continue to puzzle Biblical scholars into our own day. The main difficulties center around the words translated here “mountain slope”. The Hebrew words are *shekhem ehad*. *Ehad* means “one” and *shekhem* may refer to a “shoulder”, or a “shoulder or ridge of a mountain”—or to the town of Shechem (Modern-day Nablus) itself. Evidently Joseph understood it to mean a portion of land in the vicinity of Shechem, since he would over 400 years later be buried *“at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph (Joshua 24:32).* *Shekhem Echad* also forms an idiom meaning “shoulder to shoulder” or “as one man”—and the future territories of inheritance for both Ephraim and Manasseh would come together at this point. This is obviously the meaning when these two words appear again in **Zephaniah 3:9** (which some here see as prophesying the rebirth of the Hebrew language precedent to God’s restoring Israel to her land), *“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord.*

Genesis 49: 1-27

There are great mysteries concerning much of the poetic prophecy released by Israel over his sons in Chapter 49. We shan’t presume to comment on all of these. There are difficulties in the exact meaning of the Hebrew text as we have it today, and there are mysteries regarding exactly what would be the interpretation of some of the prophetic words which Jacob speaks forth. Genesis 49:1 states that they speak of *what will befall Israel in the last days*. We believe it therefore highly possible that they may have bearing on the identity of the descendants of Jacob and their land today and in days ahead (This in spite of the fact that presently most Jews have no idea from which tribe they are descended). Over 400 years later, they would be supplemented with further prophetic words by Moses (Deuteronomy 33). Perhaps, as with words shown to Daniel (Daniel 12:9), some of these are *“words closed up and sealed till the time*

of the end.” As we read, let us pray that these words, sent forth by the Spirit will not return to God void (Isaiah 55:11), but will indeed accomplish what He pleases, and prosper that for which they were sent out!

***Genesis 49:5.** *“Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruel violence (Hebrew: **hamas**) their trade. Let my soul not enter into their secret council, their assembly my presence shun. For in their fury they slaughtered men, at their pleasure they tore down ramparts. Cursed be their fury so fierce, and their wrath so remorseless! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.”* The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God (James 1:20); in the case of these two brothers, it produced senseless slaughter of many innocent men. It would also result in loss or dispersion of much of their future inheritance; Simeon’s territory would be enclosed within that of Judah, and Levi would have no separate territory at all.

***Genesis 49:10-11.** *“Judah is a lion’s whelp...The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.”* There has historically been great mystery surrounding this passage, part of it related to what exactly is meant by the Hebrew word transliterated “Shiloh”. It appears clear, nevertheless, that it is speaking of One who is to come to whom the “scepter” truly belongs, and who will be worthy of “the obedience of the people.” There seem to be further hints in the New Testament: Matthew 21:2-7 refers to a donkey tied with its colt upon which Yeshua would enter Jerusalem; Revelation 7:14 speaks of those whose garments will have been *“washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb”*; and Revelation 19:13 foretells One called *“Faithful and True”* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is also called *“The Word of God.”*

PLEASE PRAY: *for revelation in Israel that the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David” has come—and is coming again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!* (Revelation 5:5; 19:16).

***Genesis 49:29-31.** *“Then [Jacob] charged them and said to them: I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite...There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah...”* Something in the way she is mentioned in this passage suggests that by the end of Leah’s life (and the many years following), she who had been hated (Genesis 29:31) had grown in Jacob’s affections, and indeed his love.

***Genesis 50:19-20.** **JOSEPH** (To his brothers after the death of their father Jacob): *“Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”*—*“For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28).



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Jerusalem

[The readings for next week (15-21 January 2017) are called *Sh'mot*—“Names”. TORAH: Exodus 1:1—6:1; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 27:6—28:13; 29:22-23]

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