

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (October 13, 2010)



Bedouin tent and camels in the desert near the site of ancient Be'er Sheva.

“So Abram journeyed, going on still towards the Negev.”
(Genesis 12:9 See Torah Portion below)

1. THE “PRINCE OF PERSIA” ARRIVES IN LEBANON

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was welcomed into Lebanon with great pomp and circumstance, including massive rallies by cheering Shiites associated with the militant Hezbollah organization. Thousands of Hezbollah supporters lined the road from the airport to the capital, and a soccer stadium in southern Beirut was set up to honor his coming by the throngs. In one community a large replica of the El Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (on the Temple Mount) was constructed with an Iranian flag atop it. Tomorrow the President is planning to make a trip to the Hezbollah-controlled south and reportedly has expressed a desire to follow in the footsteps of Edward Said, a Palestinian/American Columbia University professor and activist who in July, 2000, hurled stones across the border in the direction of Israeli soldiers. One senior Israeli official expressed his opinion that, “Iran’s president is visiting Lebanon like a commander coming to inspect his troops—Hezbollah terrorists—who serve as a wing of Iran’s military in the region. Anyone who holds peace and freedom dear is watching this Iranian provocation with concern. Lebanon, which could have enjoyed peace and prosperity, has turned into the servant of the Iranian aggressor, led by Hezbollah.”

Meanwhile, all of Lebanon isn’t rejoicing. A *Haaretz* article on Monday began, “*The latest reports from Lebanon describe a frightened country; the Lebanese are terrified about the prospect of a slide toward civil war. Several reports speculate that Beirut residents are arming themselves in expectation of a flare-up of violence between the two main antagonists in Lebanon today: Hezbollah and its allies on the one hand, and Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his supporters on the other. The investigation of the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri [sure to implicate a number of Hezbollah suspects] could turn out to be the spark that sets off the tinderbox.*”

(MESS Report/ Lebanon Terrified of slide into civil war: Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff; *HAARETZ.com*: 02:58; 11 Oct 2010.).

Meanwhile, Mr. Ahmadinejad has expressed a desire to convene a high-level joint meeting later in the week between himself, Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan.

AS REQUESTED LAST WEEK, PLEASE PRAY:

- *That the Lebanese government not give in to provocative requests of the Iranian President.
- *That the LORD rebuke the pride of Mr. Ahmadinejad (Zechariah 3:2; Jude 9)...the “LORD who has chosen Jerusalem.”
- *That Israel be alert and controlled on her borders...that she not be drawn into any physical conflict before its time.
- *That no evil treaties or pacts be agreed upon in the meeting between the heads of Iran, Lebanon and Turkey.
- *For God’s mercies over Lebanon—that His redemptive purposes for that land rise up and crush the desires of His (and that people’s) enemies.
- *For Believers in Lebanon to dwell under the Shadow of the Almighty and have clarity in hearing God’s strategy for them, that they hear “What the spirit is saying to the Churches.”

2. “JERUSALEM’S OLD CITY WALLS TO BE BROKEN FOR FIRST TIME SINCE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.”

“Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb?...Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; Your walls are continually before Me” (Isaiah 49:15-16).

Prophetically, any developments affecting the “walls surrounding Jerusalem” should be seen as bearing significance. Our attention was captured by the above headline in [haaretz.com](#) last Wednesday. It refers to a plan for renovation of portions of the Old City near the Western Wall, to make it more accessible to the tens of thousands of visitors. The plan would involve the digging of a tunnel through solid rock in the southern wall at a location between the Zion Gate and the Dung Gate, leading to a four-story parking garage within the Jewish Quarter of the city. It is estimated that the plan would cost hundreds of millions of shekels, and that there would be resistance from some of the Jewish and all of the Muslim communities nearby. Although it has not yet been finalized, there appears to be little question that this plan, or something similar will soon be initiated.

Although following roughly the lines of some earlier walls from Roman and Jewish eras, the walls we see today were built in 1538 by Muslim Sultan *Suleiman the Magnificent* to keep non-Muslims *out* of the city. (Jerusalem remained under Turkish sovereignty until taken by the British in the First World War.) The last time the present walls were breached was 112 years ago in 1898 when the Ottoman authorities broke open a passage next to Jaffa Gate to allow entrance of the imperial carriage of visiting German Kaiser Wilhelm II.

The Bible has many, many things to say about the walls surrounding Jerusalem:

- “Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem” (Psalm 51:18).*
- “Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces” (Psalm 122:7).*
- “There will be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets. Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the LORD” (Psalm 144:14b-15 NIV).*

Yet because of Judah’s sin, on the ninth day of the fourth month in 586 B.C. the walls were indeed breached by Nebuchadnezzar (a catastrophe still commemorated on the 17th of *Tammuz*— the Fast of the Fourth Month, Zech. 8:19) and the Jews taken into captivity. 70 years later, Nehemiah was sent

from Babylon to oversee the rebuilding of the walls which had been broken down and the gates burned (Nehemiah 2:13).

“Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: ‘Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant’” (Isaiah 29:12-13).

Early in the new millennium, a huge bulge appeared near the south-eastern corner of the portion of the wall encircling the Temple Mount. It came about by the excavation by Muslims inside for construction of a huge underground Mosque. In the end the Jordanian’s (who since 1967 have custodial rights of the Muslim holy site alongside the Israelis) sent in a team which repaired the wall. Sometime later, during a prayer and worship service in a nearby neighborhood led by of Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews (at which one of the writers were present), at the conclusion of a reading of Psalm 99 (*“Let the peoples tremble...let the earth be moved!”*) an earthquake shook all of Jerusalem. Although initially thought to have caused little damage, within a year experts were attributing dangerous cracks which had appeared in the base of the Jerusalem’s walls to that earthquake. Remember, the present walls were built to keep non-Muslims *out* of the city. We take these signs as indicative that though there may be great battles ahead, that religion which claims and demands sovereignty over God’s holy mountain and holds power over millions of souls for whom His Son died is faulty and cracked at its foundation and it shall not stand.

“The breaker goes up before them; they break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. So their king goes on before them, and the LORD at their head” (Micah 2:13).

“ ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst’” (Zechariah 2:5).

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 are called *Lech Lecha* (“Go you forth”):

TORAH: Genesis 12:1—17:27

HAFTARAH : Isaiah 40:27—41:16

This week’s portion hearkens back to the call of Abram in Ur (Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 7:2) and ends with the promise of Isaac, and Abram with his household entering into the Covenant of

Circumcision. In the course of these chapters he will travel from Ur and Haran (12:4) to Canaan, passing through the land to Shechem, Bethel, the Negev (dry southland), Egypt, back to the Negev, back to Bethel, walking the land “northward, southward, eastward, and westward (13:14), Hebron, to war north of Damascus, back to Hebron. We cannot hope to discuss here all that takes place in the course of these travels; but ask the LORD to attend you as you travel with the Father of our Faith, “ ‘Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was but one I called him, then I blessed him and multiplied him.’ Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places...”

***Genesis 12:2a. “I will make you a great nation...”** Hebrew for “nation” is *goy*; “great nation” is *goy gadol*. In modern Hebrew slang, *goy* and *goyim* (plural) are used, sometimes contemptuously, for individual non-Jews or Gentiles. But it is important to see that from the beginning, Scripture is speaking of an *individual* human whose descendants would become a *great nation*. God saw and continues to see this nation as a people...of the seed of Abraham.

***Genesis 12:2. “I will make a great nation of you and will give-you-blessing and will make your name great. Be a blessing! (Everett Fox translation; emphases ours).** In the Hebrew the last three words are clearly a *command/imperative form*. God isn’t saying that the seed of Abraham “will be” a blessing...he is speaking a command into that seed, “*BE!*” A blessing to all the children of Adam through that seed would be released in the coming of Messiah. However, the holy command has never been annulled. The workings of God for all humankind continue to be mirrored in his workings in this People...as such, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, she continues to “Be a Blessing”. And as Israel returns to her fullness through recognizing and receiving her Messiah, her acceptance will be “*life from the dead!*” (Romans 11:15).

***Genesis 12:7-8. “Then YHVH (The LORD) appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your seed I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him. And he moved/shifted from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent...where he built an altar to YHVH and called on the name of YHVH.”** Wonderful things happened in Shechem (modern-day Nablus). The God of Glory had appeared to Abram while still in Ur (Acts 7:2). Now after a long and arduous journey, he *appeared* again! Look at the Scripture again...Shechem certainly appeared to be:

A legitimate destination of God’s leading.

A place of God’s revealed Presence

A place of the releasing of God’s prophetic Word

A place of *established worship* to “the One who reveals Himself”

It seemed the ideal place to settle down. Yet one verse later Abraham moves to Bethel. The word translated “moved” also means to “take a shift” (Robert Alter translates it “*pulled up his stakes*”). As we saw during the recent *Sukkot* festival, God “makes everything beautiful *in its time or season* (Ecclesiastes 3:11)...but he is under no obligation to beautify if the season for our being a certain place has passed and we insist on staying there. Abram took his “*shift*”...and a much greater blessing awaited him at Bethel, a place he would return to time and again...and to which his grandson Jacob would return to find an open heavens with the angels still ascending and descending.

***Genesis 14:5. “In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness...And the king of Sodom went out to meet him [i.e. Abraham] after his striking down Chedorlaomer and the**

kings that were with him...”. Abraham pursued and struck down this king who himself had struck down the *Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, and the Horites*. It is fascinating to discover how almost 500 years later in Deuteronomy 2:10, 12, 20, 22; 3:11, descendants of each of these peoples, whose height and cruel renown had paralyzed with fear ten of the twelve spies 40 years before, are dispatched quickly by the children of that generation before their advancement into Canaan. Perhaps Joshua and Caleb had been taught how the God of their father Abraham had easily given him victory over a king who had subdued all of these feared peoples.

Genesis 14:19.** ***“Then Melchizedek king of Shalem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of El Elyon (God Most-High). Just as English *god* comes from an old Anglo-Saxon expression for deity, the Canaanites word for god was *el*, and they had many *elelim*. Soon after Abram entered Canaan, the One who had appeared to him in Ur and Shechem began to reveal aspects of His nature which made clear how *this “El”* differed from all the other “el’s” crowding the land. These attributes are reflected in a number of descriptive *names* which began to be used by Abraham and his descendants...*El Elyon* is the *El* (or God) who is “most High”—*El Roi* (16:13) is *El* who “Sees”—*El Shaddai* (17:1) is *El* who is “Almighty and sustains all life”.

Genesis 15:6.** ***“And he believed in YHVH, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Genesis 16:4b-5a.** ***“And when she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [Sarai] became despised in her eyes. Then Sarai said to Abram, ‘May the wrong done me be upon you!’” We must realize that the struggle reflected in Hagar’s actions and Sarai’s response is something of a far greater magnitude than anything of which either of these women could have been aware. Far from being merely a domestic squabble (although, although it may have seemed so to them), *a cosmic spiritual battle was raging over God’s covenant on behalf not only of Abraham’s descendants but of the whole Human Race!* When Sarai speaks wildly to Abram of the “wrong” being done her, she uses the word *hamas*—a word used other places in the Hebrew Bible for “cruel violence” (Genesis 49:5; Psalm 25:19; 27:12). A great Enemy was seeking to divert the line of Covenant which God had determined to come through Sarai’s womb (Genesis 17:21); this covenant-hating Power of “cruel violence” was trying to tear her apart. ***This same battle is still raging!*** The Muslim religion teaches that God’s Covenant went through Ishmael, not Isaac. The power behind this falsehood hates Life, and the God of Life, and rules those presently under its dominion with *hamas*. **PLEASE PRAY: That Muslims will be freed from a power of cruel violence which has sought to keep them outside the covenant of God Most High. Pray for dreams and visions...for a powerful working of the Holy Spirit of God who sheds abroad in hearts the Love that the Father has for them. Pray that perfect love will be discovered to come through a knowledge of Jesus...and that perfect Love will cast out fear.**

***Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem***

[The readings for next week (17-23 October) will be called *VaYera* (Was Seen). TORAH: Genesis 18:1—22:24; HAFTARAH: II Kings 4:1-37]