

Prayer Update From Israel (October 22, 2012)



“Hayom yom huledet, Hayom yom huledet...”

Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu celebrate the Prime Minister’s 63rd birthday on Sunday. Please pray a gracious year of strength, wisdom, and divine guidance for Mr. Netanyahu!

1. GILO AGAIN

This week Israel’s Interior Ministry approved a plan to expand the southwestern Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo by 797 units. This has again occasioned an uproar with strong criticism being leveled at Israel by the European Union, Britain and France. As will be seen below, this area was captured from Jordan in 1967 and has been a part of Jerusalem ever since. Much of the international community doesn’t recognize Israel’s sovereignty over anything acquired during that war, claiming it belongs to Palestinian Arabs and should be part of a future Muslim Palestinian state. EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton labeled the community expansion plan “regrettable” and “illegal”; her office claiming that “settlements are illegal under international law and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible.” The statement goes on to reiterate that the EU urges “the government of Israel to immediately end all settlement activities in the West Bank, including in east Jerusalem [Gilo is not located geographically in ‘east Jerusalem’—see below]. This denunciation of Jews settling in Judea and Samaria clearly disregards the legal right granted by the League of Nations in regard to the San Remo Resolution of April 25, 1920, a statement of International Law which has never been repealed, and which grants Jews the right to live there. Sunday Israeli Foreign Minister Liberman declared that “*Jerusalem is not a settlement...Gilo is a Jewish neighborhood...an integral part of Jerusalem*” and that “*Israel will not negotiate with anyone over Jerusalem.*” And Prime Minister Netanyahu opened his weekly cabinet meeting by saying, “*We place no limits on construction in our capital city. Just as they build in London, Paris, Washington and Moscow, we will continue to build in Jerusalem... We have no less historic and strong connection to our capital.*”

Thank you for praying with us about this part of our city which seems continually to come bouncing back into the international spotlight. To help you with some history and background,

we reprint below from an *Update* we wrote almost three years ago, November 19th, 2009, at which time Israel was enduring similar castigation over development of the neighborhood.

THE “SETTLEMENT” OF GILO.

Gilo is a large neighborhood in southwest Jerusalem. With a population of some 40,000 Israelis, it is one of the city’s largest suburbs. An area with this name is mentioned in Joshua 15:51 as having been a portion of the tribe of Judah; it is also mentioned in II Samuel 15:12 as the home of Ahithophel, one of David’s counselors. Prior to 1948 much of this area was land which had been purchased by Jews. During the War for Independence it was occupied by the Egyptian army which used it as a base for shelling West Jerusalem. Afterwards, it was held by the Kingdom of Jordan until that power was driven out by the Israelis in the 1967 war, at which time it was annexed by Israel as part of Jerusalem. The area began soon to be built up, contiguous to surrounding neighborhoods pre-dating the war. It has now lain within Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries for well over forty years. During the Second Intifada the community came under heavy gunfire and mortar attacks from Hamas forces taking over nearby Beit Jalla and Bethlehem, resulting in a cement protective barrier being built as protection. Gilo is predominantly Jewish, although it does contain some Israeli Arabs. There is also a substantial Messianic Jewish presence there.

This past week controversy erupted in America and Europe because of Israel’s plan to build 900 new housing units in the community. Gilo is part of a city; it is not some isolated Jewish settlement out in Judea or Samaria, nor is it one of the large contested “blocks” such as Maale Adumim or Ariel. It is not even a Jewish area located within the parameters of so called “Arab East Jerusalem”. Yet as of this week, a daily increasing number of nations appear to be adopting the Palestinian definition of “settlement”—any area developed and populated by Israel within land taken from Jordan or Egypt in the 1967 war. Suddenly this neighborhood has interred internationally into the category of “settlement.” As recalled last week, in his Cairo address, President Obama decried the legitimacy of Israeli settlements, calling on Israel that they “stop”. On Tuesday White House spokesman Robert Gibbs expressed “dismay” at the decision to build more homes in Gilo. The British Foreign Office followed suit by issuing a statement that, “The Foreign Secretary has been very clear that a credible deal involves Jerusalem as a shared capital. Expanding settlements on occupied land in east Jerusalem makes that deal much harder, so this decision on Gilo is wrong and we oppose it.” What makes this statement absurd (and goes a long way to illustrate how a negative foreign policy towards Israel can literally cause blindness) is that Gilo has nothing to do with “east Jerusalem”—a glance at any map of Jerusalem will show that Gilo is in fact located in the south and far to the west of both the Old City and the center of Modern Jerusalem. A similar confusion of fact reportedly came from UN Secretary-General Ki-moon, when he was quoted recently as referring to Gilo as a “settlement” built on territory “conquered from the Palestinians in 1967.” This sadly brings into focus a rapidly growing revisionist history which has Israel “conquering” Palestinians in 1967. In truth, the only armies fought against and defeated in that war were Egypt, Jordan and Syria. As of this writing, the European Union, China and (of course) Iran have joined in the chorus of disapproval.

If Israel cannot build in Gilo, neither can it build in other flourishing Jewish areas of Jerusalem built after the Six Day War; areas such as Ramot Eshkol, French Hill, Pisgat Ze’ev, or East Talpiot. At present Prime Minister Netanyahu appears to be standing his ground against this new pressure from outside, as is Jerusalem’s mayor Nir Birkat, who states that he will not halt construction in any part of the capital—*“Israeli law does not discriminate between Arabs and Jews or between east and west of the city...The demand to cease construction just for Jews is illegal, also in the United States and any*

other enlightened place in the world. It is inconceivable that the U.S. government would demand a construction freeze in the U.S. based on race religion or sex, and the attempt to demand this from Jerusalem constitutes a double standard that is unacceptable. The Jerusalem municipality will continue to enable construction in every part of the city for Jews and Arabs alike.”

As nations begin more and more to focus disapproval on Israel and in particular on her relationship to the ancient capitol over which God has granted her sovereignty, we would call Believers to pay close attention to what is written about this city throughout the Prophecy of Zechariah: The LORD is “jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal”; He is “returning to Jerusalem with mercy”; He will “again comfort Zion and will again choose Jerusalem.” This last is repeated over and over. In fact, mention of this “choosing of Jerusalem” is part of the Word which *actually defeats the satan* in Zechariah 3:2!

PLEASE PRAY:

***A mantle of integrity, courage and heavenly guidance over PM Netanyahu and Mayor Birkat as they are faced with enormous pressures over the decisions they must make over the Holy City.**

***Zechariah 12:10 over the citizens of Gilo—that a spirit of Grace and Supplication be poured out. Pray for faith, hope and love—and release of vision and the unction of the Holy Spirit in the Messianic Body of that city to spread the good news of Messiah.**

***That “Jerusalem will be inhabited as a town without walls”—as God enlarges it according to His Word and purposes, and that He will be a “wall of fire all around her, and the glory in her midst” (Zechariah 2:4-5).**

2. EARTHQUAKES AND RUMOURS OF WAR

“For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground” (Amos 9:9 NIV).

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs... This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:7-8, 14 NASB).

“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’” (Hebrews 12: 26-28 NIV).

“ISRAEL PREPARES FOR THE WORST WITH TWO MAJOR DRILLS: Country’s first earthquake preparedness drill takes place alongside largest-ever joint military exercise with US” Such was a headline in Sunday morning’s *The Times of Israel* online newspaper (21 Oct 2012; 6:04 a.m.). At the same time that 3,500 American and Israeli troops began a month-long air-defense simulation exercise, Israel’s emergency services joined in a huge five-day earthquake preparedness

drill—the first ever in Israel. The drill, named “Turning Point 6”, seeks to simulate conditions which might be expected from a 5.6 Richter level earthquake in Eilat, than a 7.1 shaking in the Upper Galilee—followed by a Tsunami warning along the coast. Television and radio broadcasts are interrupted, citizens are urged to find shelter; children in schools also participate in the drills. Home Front estimates of casualties which might be expected from such scenarios are grim—at least 7,000 deaths, 8,600 people in serious condition, 37,000 lightly injured, 9,500 trapped under rubble, some 170,000 displaced and homeless—28,000 buildings heavily damaged. To the north in the “Dan” region, 95,000 buildings including 300 schools would likely collapse with a 7 or higher quake. It is estimated that 70% of buildings in an area housing 42% of Israel’s population were built before earthquake resistant standards were set in 1980. A strong earthquake would likely level large parts of Jerusalem’s Old City, large areas of which for centuries have been layered over existing structures in seeming ramshackle fashion. The *Al Aqsa* mosque on the Temple Mount was completely destroyed by an earthquake in 705 of the Common Era, and again in 1033. The Scriptures teach that God will “once more shake the heavens and the earth”—and there are a number of passages related specifically to Jerusalem.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For wisdom and unction in the Israeli government regarding what physical measures may be taken now which would be truly effective in protecting Israeli citizens from the shakings which are to come.**

***For Believers in Israel and Jerusalem to be about the business of informing their non-believing fellows of the only true place of safety—at the right-hand of the LORD and within the light of His face (Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-28; Hebrews passage above).**

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 with 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 here to discuss 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...”* (Isaiah 51:1-3a).



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)

***Genesis 12:2a.** *“I will make you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* Hebrew for “nation” is *goy*; “great nation” is *goy gadol*. In Modern Hebrew slang, *goy* and *goyim* (plural) are often used in reference to individuals or peoples who are non-Jews/Gentiles. Scripture itself most often uses *goyim* to refer to nations other than Israel. However, here God is speaking to an individual human being drawn from one of the nations, who in his descendants would become a *great nation* in which *families* throughout the earth would be blessed. It may be significant that “earth” here is *adamah*—soil (from which *adam*—human beings were formed). God saw and continues to see this people as an individual nation before him of the seed of Abraham...and his blessing through them is on behalf of all humankind.

***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 here that Abraham and his seed “will be” a blessing; rather, he is speaking a command into that seed, **“BE!”** Indeed, a blessing to all the children of Adam through that seed would be released in the coming of Messiah. But this 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 time 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". By verse 22, Abram realizes that the God who had appeared to him as YHVH in Ur and Shechem (12:1; 12:7-8) and this *El Elyon* are One and the same, "*I raise my hand to YHVH El Elyon, the possessor of Heaven and earth...*"

***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, so it may have seemed 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 a divine 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 from the Most High God will be discovered to come through knowledge of Jesus...and that that perfect Love will cast out fear.**

****Isaiah 41:8-13. "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My beloved...You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. For I am the YHVH your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'"***



***Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem***

[The readings for next week (28 October—November 3) will be called *VaYera*—Was Seen. TORAH: Genesis 18:1—22:24; HAFTARAH: II Kings 4:1-37]

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