

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (October 25, 2010)



*“He makes His angels winds, His ministers a flame of fire”
(Cloud over Jerusalem on October 24, 2010)*

1. PERES: “WE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES.”

“O Israel, Hope in the LORD, from this time forth and forever” (Psalm 131:3).

These unfortunate words were uttered by our President Shimon Perez at a conference in Jerusalem last Thursday and formed a headline in the *Jerusalem Post* the following day. Although the statement wasn't really central to the article it headed, it nevertheless describes an assumption held by many if not most secular Jewish citizens in Israel. After all, huge stores of military hardware and technology come annually from the United States (The U.S. will be supplying the new F-35 Stealth jets); there is enormous trade in the marketplace exchanged between the two countries. A drive along Highway 2 north of Tel Aviv can come as a shock to some tourists when, instead of camels and caravans, what comes into view are the flashing lights of *Home Depot*, *Toys are Us*, *Office Depot*...not to mention *MacDonald's*! And this is but the tip of the iceberg. If all trade with America were to suddenly stop, as things go now, the country would indeed grind to a halt...at least for a season.

We have a love and great respect for the United States. She has served as a shelter and haven for Jewish people for centuries. It was her vote which was an essential catalyst in Israel coming to birth in 1948. And it is certainly the prayers of millions of believers there which have been used of God in preserving us since that birth! Yet, it is God in Heaven who has purposed that Israel will be a people unto Himself—set apart—dependent upon Him. The root for the word “Zion” is the same as that for a “signpost”—a signal which points the way. Returned Israel continues to be that “signpost”—a sign reflecting God's ways with man, reflecting what happens when a nation is dependent upon the God of Heaven—or what happens when it turns away and depends for its life upon other nations of the world; and she is a picture of God's faithfulness to His covenant, faithful even when His people walk in darkness, to steer them towards the Light.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For the Body of Messiah in Israel...that it grow in strength, maturity and power in the Holy Spirit...that the *Meveser* “Good News” spread through every level of Israeli society...bringing her to a place where she can bear whatever is necessary for God to bring Her into a place of dependence upon Him first of all for her needs, her sustenance, her protection, her Life!**

***Psalm 33:12: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”**

***Ezekiel 34:13-16.** *“I will bring them [Israel] out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel [NOTE: this expression ‘mountains of Israel’ refers to the territory of ancient Judea and Samaria comprising the presently highly contested “West Bank”]. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.”*

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 *Chayeh Sarah* (“Sarah Lived”):

TORAH: Genesis 23:1—25:18

HAFTARAH : I Kings 1:1-31

***Genesis 23:17.** *“So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.”* This location is Hebron, a few miles south of Jerusalem. Purchased by the Patriarch in ancient times, it remains one of the most contested and contentious places in the Holy Land. It is the place where the LORD spoke with Abraham as a friend (Gen. 18—in fact, the name itself is associated with a Hebrew word for friendship); It is where the first Israelite spies saw the giants—and where Caleb later conquered them; It is where David was instructed to first set up his kingship. Hebron was the major city during the Six Day War from which, the inhabitants emerged with a white flag, surrendering to Israeli troops without firing a shot. Yet it is also a place where violence repeatedly seeks to rule—where Jews were massacred by Muslims in 1929, where an Orthodox Jew massacred Muslims in 1994. Today Israel holds sovereignty over a small part of the city (total sovereignty was surrendered as part of the Oslo Agreement in 1997). There is a tiny community of Orthodox Jews both within and outside of the city. Neither the Muslims nor the Jews living there (both of whom claim Abraham for Father) yet believe in the true identity of the One who “appeared” to Abraham on this spot, as recorded in Genesis 18, who “rejoiced to see His day”—the “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32), who restores friendship with the Father for all humankind. Please pray that God’s Kingdom Come in Hebron! That the Son be revealed there.

***Genesis 24:5-6.** *“And the servant said to him, ‘Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Beware that you do not take my son back there!’ Cf: Hebrews 11:15: “And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.”* Please pray for immigrants whom God brings back to Israel (It can be frighteningly hard, especially for the older ones)—they they will not listen to the temptations to “go back to America” or to “go back to Russia”. Pray for grace and mercy for absorption into the society in the land of their Fathers...but more importantly, into the *God* of their Fathers. And for the Body of Messiah here—that it also will not look back, but rather fare forward into “a better, that is, a heavenly country.”

***Genesis 24:12.** *“Then he [Abraham’s servant] said, ‘O YHVH God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show lovingkindness with my master Abraham.’”* The literal Hebrew of the second phrase of the servant’s prayer reads, *“Please make it happen before me today!”*

***Genesis 24:62-64.** *“Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi (i.e. ‘Well of the Living One who sees me’)...went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted...”* Dwelling and meditating in the Presence (before the face) of the One who sees us, prepares and times us to lift our own eyes to see and recognize when provision for our destiny is approaching.

***Genesis 24:27.** *“And the man [i.e. Abraham’s servant] bowed down his head and worshiped YHVH. And he said, ‘Blessed be YHVH God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master”* (Emphases ours). This combination of God’s attributes “lovingkindness and truth”, *chesid and emet* in Hebrew, are repeated throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. In John 1:17 of the *New Covenant*, the Hebrew translation reads, *“For the Torah was given through Moses, but the chesid and the emet came through Yeshua the Messiah.”*

***Genesis 25:12-16.** *“Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s maidservant, bore to Abraham. And these were the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael and these were their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations.”* This chronicles the fulfillment of God’s promise regarding Ishmael found in Genesis 17:20. Nowhere is there a promise that this “seed” of Abraham (anymore than that of the children born to him through Ketura—Ch 25:1-6) would remain a perpetually distinct race as would the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. A commonly held erroneous assumption that all inhabitants of modern-day Arab nations are physical descendants of Ishmael and therefore “also children of Abraham”, besides lacking any Biblical warrant, completely ignores the physical descendants of the vast numbers of peoples who inhabited these regions long before Ishmael was born. Of course Ishmael’s and Ketura’s descendants exist amongst Arab peoples, but placing all Arabs into a “third category” from Jews and Gentiles, besides being unsound can prepare the way for confusion in evangelization of other Muslim peoples in the Middle-East such as Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Iranians, none of whom are of Arabic lineage. Again, we are speaking here of *historical physical* connections to the Patriarchs; we in no way wish to “take away” from the true heritage and identity of this great people group whom God loves and is bringing to Himself. Of course the Holy Spirit may make use of *analogies* regarding Ishmael. Since Islam (meaning “submission”) holds that the actual covenant of God for Humankind came through Ishmael instead of Isaac...God’s call to

Hagar (Genesis 16:9) to go back and submit to Sarah (Which would include to God's promises of a Blessing through *her* seed) can still resonate as a call of hope and life in the hearts of all Muslim peoples, regardless of their physical ethnicity. Indeed, their return and submission to God's true Covenant may well be used to trigger a last-days awakening in the original people of the Promise!



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[The readings for next week (31 October—6 November 2010) will be called *Toldot* (Generations). TORAH: Genesis 25:19—28:9; HAFTARAH: Malachi 1:1—2:7]