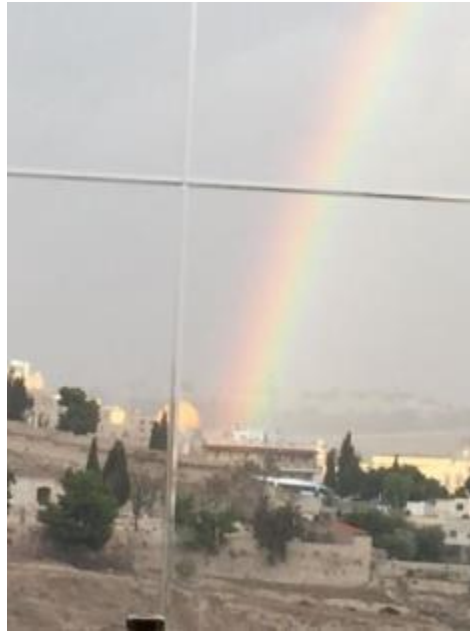


Prayer Update From Israel (October 26, 2015)



Blessed Hope

A rainbow over the Temple Mount, taken exactly a year ago through a window at *Succat Hallel* in Jerusalem. The photographer inadvertently positioned the camera so that the joining of the panes formed a cross cutting through the Dome of the Rock, the place where God provided redemption for Isaac (See Genesis 22 in Torah Portion below) and where the Redeemer-King of the World will one day reign (Psalm 2:6).

1. SHIFTING THE ATMOSPHERE ...

We are grateful for your prayers. This week there continue to be isolated knife attacks both within internationally recognized Israel, and in Judea and Samaria—yet, as of this writing, the violence in Jerusalem has subsided noticeably. We have seen the Lord’s hand over His people...a friend of ours, a young Messianic violinist whose wife was on the verge of giving birth, received a call from a companion offering a ride into town a week-ago last Tuesday. The bus he always takes and would have been on that morning was the one attacked by terrorists who killed two people and wounded over ten others. And during these violent days, the testimony of believers in Yeshua has reached the media. Our next-door neighbor Marike Veldman, of whom we wrote last week, who was on that bus and the first attacked, is home and recovering. This week she was interviewed by *ynet.news*, an Israeli online news source published in both English and Hebrew. The headline of the article read, ***“Dutch victim of East Talpiot attack: I yelled ‘Jesus, save me!’”*** (Her inspiring article may be accessed by googling that headline.)

Yet, as we wrote last week, the Temple Mount continues to be at the center of things. Another trip to the region by US Secretary of State Kerry to try and restore calm, included talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Jordan King Abdullah and Palestinian President Abbas, and

concentrated on the Temple Mount. The Kingdom of Jordan supplies an Islamic contingent on the Mount which oversees the Muslim holy sites. Since the close of the 1967 War, Israel has maintained what is called a “status quo” on the mountain...meaning primarily that Muslims may worship there, non-Muslims may visit but not (outwardly) pray there, and the Mount will be patrolled by Jordanians and Israelis. Abdullah sees himself as ultimately responsible on behalf of all Islam for maintaining this separation. Kerry came out of the meeting with an announcement that Israel had agreed to 24/7 video surveillance on the Mountain. This led to headlines which were irritating to Israelis—implying that Netanyahu had for the first time agreed that non-Jews will not be allowed to pray on the Mountain, and that the cameras would enforce this ban. This is false and foolish—Israel has been enforcing the ban to be enforced all along, the Prime Minister repeatedly declaring himself in support of the “status quo”. Violence on the Mountain has been the result of Muslims inciting their people to harass the non-Muslims who come to visit there, and false claims that Israel was implementing plans to destroy the mosque there. Ironically, if the cameras are even allowed to be installed, they may in fact serve to grant proof to Israeli claims that the violence is being incited solely by the Muslims.

Earlier in the week, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), allowed a resolution to be brought forward which would have declared Jerusalem’s Western Wall (“Wailing Wall”) a holy site for Muslims only—an integral part of the al-Aqsa mosque compound (Temple Mount). After raising a storm amongst world Jewry, the clause was at the last moment withdrawn. The resolution approved by the board of UNESCO nevertheless strongly condemned “Israeli aggression and illegal measures restricting freedom of worship and access to the holy Muslim site of the al-Aqsa Mosque”. The UNESCO text also stated that Al-Haram Al-Ibrahim (the Tomb of the Patriarchs, at Hebron, where Abraham & Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Israel and Leah are buried) and the Bilal Ibn Rabah mosque (a site next to Bethlehem claimed by Jews to be Rachel’s tomb) are an integral part of Palestine. The resolution was adopted with 26 votes. The U.S., Germany, UK, Holland, Czech Republic and Estonia voted against it; 25 nations, including France, abstained. (“UNESCO slams Israel for ‘aggression’ on Temple Mount”: ynet.news.com, 21 10 15 20:24).

It is interesting that these events take place a week before the Torah Reading which includes the offering of Isaac (an event denied by Islam) on that mount (Genesis 22), and two weeks before the reading containing the death of Sarah and the purchasing of the Cave at Machpelah in Hebron by Abraham for 400 shekels of silver (Genesis 23).

PLEASE PRAY:

***The prayer points provided by Rick Ridings in the “Not Now” section of last week’s Update (See that Update for details under each point):**

- 1. “Re-Enforce” a “Gag and Restraining Order” on Demonic Incitement.**
- 2. Proclaim that the LORD will “Cut Off those who Cut”.**
- 3. Pray for the Roots of this Incitement to be up-rooted.**

4. Pray for those who have been influenced by the lies of incitement would have a revelation of the Lord and His heart for them.

PRAY THAT “HE WHO MAKES PEACE IN HIS HIGH PLACES” (Job 25:2) WOULD MAKE PEACE IN HIS LAND, ON ITS BORDERS (Psalm 147:14), AND IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE (Colossians 3:15).

2. STAYING INFORMED: NEWS SOURCES FOR ISRAEL.

“The reports on Israel in our media are so brief (or biased) that we don’t really know what’s going on over there!” We hear this often as we travel outside of the country. It does not really fall within the scope of our Prayer Updates to provide readers with a “news service” from Israel. We attempt, rather, to focus each week on one or two issues which we sense to be of special importance for intercession. And we are only one of a number of ministries in the Land which seek to share with you specific issues on their hearts for the purpose of prayer.

Of course all “media” is not bad; we are grateful for the reputable News sources presently available in Israel to help us know what is going on. It is important to stay informed, and we try periodically to share with you several resources we have found useful in doing so.

The News services and Ministries listed below will certainly grant to our readers a much clearer picture of what is occurring in Israel “on the ground” than they are likely to find in the services available on T.V., radio and in newspapers and magazines available in their cities and countries. We would advise you to place several of them in an Israel folder in your “Favorites”. Day by day—but especially during times of crisis in Israel, they may then be opened with a click to see up-to-the-minute reports in English of what is occurring throughout the Land and in Jerusalem. Besides frequently updated news-stories, analyses and commentaries, there is in each a constantly scrolling synthesis of “breaking news.”

Of course, the presentation on each news-source will to some degree be influenced by the “bent” of the editors of that particular source. We find it valuable to be exposed to each of these slants. The point of view of writers and editors of a “religious” paper are going to be sometimes at variance with those of a secular more ‘left-of-center’ news source. Yet, both will at times report stories which would not find their ways into the other’s paper. Being exposed to varying viewpoints is important if we wish to understand and be praying for all of Israel. Yet, the main “news stories” of any of these sources will generally be sound.

There are a few on-line news-services in Israel whose journalism has, in our opinion, gone so far to the left (or right) that they have become pernicious—biased commentaries placed long-side their news stories in such a way as to grant each equal weight to the viewer. For our purposes here, we have chosen not to mention those in the list below.

We would caution you, that it is the LORD who “*knows what lies in darkness and Light dwells with Him*” (Daniel 2:20-22). We must ask His Spirit to guide us in discernment and counsel regarding what we see in all human news services. Nor are we to become fixated only upon the news stories coming continually into our computers. The Hebrew of Psalm

122:6 says literally, “Ask after the peace of Jerusalem”. We see the following as resources from which the Spirit may choose to answer that request, so that we may pray knowledgably for the Peace of Jerusalem.

A. Israel News Services Available on the Internet.

The following four English news services provide a spectrum of political and ideological perspective. Each now provide running up-to-the-minute 24/7 news bulletins.

* **The Jerusalem Post** (Internet Edition)

<http://www.jpost.com/>

This English paper considers itself an heir of the Palestine Post of British Mandate days. Center to right of center politically.

* **The Times of Israel**

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/>

Founded by a former editor of the Jerusalem Post, the *Times* is also “right of center”.

We consider both the *Post* and the *Times* to be probably the best all-round sources for up-to-the-minute English news reports on Israel for those in the nations.

* **YNET News**

www.ynetnews.com

Owned and operated by *Yediot Aharnot*, the largest-circulation Hebrew newspaper. YNET is certainly “left of center—left wing” politically speaking—although not so much as *HaAretz*. For quick and sound coverage of breaking news-stories, it is excellent. And some of its editorial analyses are very good.

* **Arutz Sheva**

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/>

English-language new service with Orthodox Jewish perspective.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES WITH NEWS UPDATES OPERATING IN ISRAEL.

These services, besides having many helpful and informative resources available on their regular web sites, have either daily or weekly news summaries which may be subscribed to for free and will appear in your e-mail box. We would emphasize that these are only two of several ministries which have begun releasing similar services in more recent years.

*** International Christian Embassy Jerusalem**

www.icej.org

ICEJ Daily News Service (News and Analysis)

Subscribe by going to www.icej.org, opening “ICEJ Publications” and clicking “NEWS” at the very top. Then under “Ways to get ICEJ News” click either

“Free daily ICEJ News email”

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This is, in our opinion, one of the very best daily syntheses of News in Israel.

*** Bridges For Peace Weekly “Israel Current News Update and Prayer Focus”**

Web Site: <http://www.bridgesforpeace.com>

News stories are available at the Website.

To receive a weekly Israel Prayer Update in your e-mail, visit the Web site, scroll down and click on the “Israel Update with Prayer” icon, and fill out the information.

Each news item on this Update is followed by a Prayer Focus and an applicable Scripture reference.

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 2-8 November are called VaYera—“And [YHVH] Appeared”

TORAH: Genesis 18:1—22:24

HAFTARAH: II Kings 4:1-37

***Genesis 18:1, 3.** *“Then the LORD appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre [Hebron], as he was sitting in the tent door...Three men were standing by him...he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’ [“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad...Before Abraham was, I AM.” Yeshua speaking: John 8:56, 58.]*

There is no clearer example in the Hebrew Scriptures of God taking on human form to meet with His children—He “appeared” to Abraham. When Abraham sees Him and runs to greet Him, it is to Someone he recognizes (Remember, God had already “appeared” to Him at least three times before—Acts 7:2; Gen. 12:7; 17:1). By this time he had also certainly come to recognize the sound of the “*Word of the LORD*” coming to him (Gen. 13:14; 15:1). Abraham approaches the three men, but to One he says, “*My Lord...*” Now, instead of using the normal Hebrew word *Adoni* (Lord/Master/Sir), the vowel points of the text show that he used the word *Adonai*—a pronunciation used only *for Deity!* And in the ensuing conversation, both with Abraham and with Sarah, it is made abundantly clear that it is the LORD with whom they are speaking (The other two ‘men’ are obviously angels, who will soon release destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah).

PLEASE PRAY *for believers in Israel that, from “inclining our ears to His voice” and “seeking His face”, we become so familiar with our Lord and His messengers that we recognize their presence when they move among us. Pray for us that in our busy-ness we “not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels”* (Hebrews 13:2).

***The LORD appears to him by the terebinth trees at Mamre—which is Hebron.** Hebron is related to the word for “friendship” or “companionship”—implying a close association. *Some see Hebron, not Jerusalem, as being the true place of Hebrew “identity.”* It was here that the LORD in human appearance and Abraham ate and talked together as friends. The city would have holy significance for the Hebrews from this time on. All of the Patriarchs would be buried there. During the 400 years that Israel was in Egypt, the evil one would try and take it over; but Caleb would rip it away from those giants when he and Joshua finally brought their people into the land. It would be here that David, at the instruction of the Lord, set up his kingdom for the first seven years of his reign. Jews continued to dwell in Hebron until modern times, when an uprising and massacre took place there in 1929. In 1967 Hebron was taken by Israeli troops without firing a shot. Sometime later, a contingent of brave Jewish women marched in and occupied a place inside of the city; another Jewish settlement was built outside. In 1997, in obeisance to the Oslo “accord,” occupying Israeli troops finally pulled out of the city (some continue to be stationed there to guard the tiny enclave of Jews and to insure access to the Tomb of the Patriarchs). Liberal Israeli governments have pushed for Israel to simply yield up the city and pull out of it altogether; until now, that has not happened.

The Muslim religion looks at Hebron as the burial place of one of its leaders. It has sought to resolve discrepancies between its teachings and those of the Bible by holding that the Hebrew Scriptures alter the ancient accounts, that in fact Ibrahim [Abraham] was the first Muslim, and Allah's covenant came through Isma'il [Ishmael], not Isaac. Presently, like the giants of *Arbah* in ancient times, the spirit behind this religion holds Hebron in its grip. And the Jews living in and around Hebron, although showing great courage and devotion, at times manifest their zeal in a violence not far-removed from that of those they perceive as their enemies surrounding them.

PLEASE PRAY: *that the timings and purposes of the LORD will be released in Hebron “on earth as they are in Heaven”.* Pray for a Great Light to illumine both Arab and Jew in their communities in Hebron, the light of the Most High God who desires to have a friendship with all the sons of Adam. Pray against the spiritual strongholds of cruel violence (Hebrew: *hamas*) which seek to hold both Jew and Arab captive in this city. Pray that national Israel will not come to despise her birthright, which includes this city of the burial place of her Fathers.

***Genesis 18:14.** *“Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”* [cf: Jeremiah 32;17-18. *“Ah, Lord YHVH! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great Power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too wonderful for you...the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is YHVH of Armies.”*]. Many translations read “too difficult” or “too hard” for “wonderful”. This is partly correct, but Hebrew *peleh* means “that which is so extraordinary or unusual as to awaken wonder”. This is the same word as that used in Exodus 15:11—*“You are awesome in praise, doing wonders O LORD.”* Our God is a God of Wonders—executing extraordinary acts beyond our abilities to comprehend. Yet, nothing challenges *His* comprehension!

***Genesis 18:19.** *“For I [YHVH] have known him [Abraham], in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of YHVH, to do righteousness and justice, that YHVH may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”* Psalm 71:18 picks up on this crucial responsibility which accompanies the intimacy which God desires to have with us—that of passing it on to those who follow after us, *“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.”*

***Genesis 20:6-7.** *“And God said to him [Abimelech] in a dream, ‘Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live....’”*

PLEASE PRAY: that though surrounded by peoples who are often hostile to us, we would make allowance in our hearts for the grace and loving kindness which goes forth from our God on behalf of all men and women of every nation. He is not willing that any should perish. Pray that we will not stereotype and dismiss the peoples and nations around us, but be sensitive and ready to pray restoration and prosperity upon those whom God may choose through us to rest His grace and mercy.

***Genesis 21:9-12.** *“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my sons, with Isaac.’ And the matter was very displeasing to Abraham’s sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed.’”*

We find teachings seeking to attribute the conflict in the Middle East to a “rejection spirit” occasioned by Abraham’s wrongfully sending Ishmael away, to be misguided, because **1)** both this passage and Galatians 4:28-31 make clear that Abraham was obeying God in honoring Sarah’s demand to send Ishmael away, and **2)** those who teach this usually do so from a viewpoint that all Arab peoples are descended from Ishmael, a stance for which there is no Biblical or historically verifiable support (such a view disregards the presence and descendants of the millions who lived in what are today considered “Arab” countries long before Ishmael or Isaac were even born). The ridiculing of Isaac by Ishmael may imply that Hagar had not fully obeyed the Angel of the LORD in “submitting herself to Sarah and her hand” after she returned the first time from the desert (16:9). In all events, God loved Hagar and Ishmael and watched over them—eventually Ishmael became the “father” of twelve princes (Gen. 12:20; 25:16).

***Genesis 21:33.** *“Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of YHVH, the Everlasting God.”* As we have mentioned, as we progress with the Patriarchs through Genesis, we see YHVH who appeared to Abram in Ur, continually revealing new attributes of His nature and character—showing how *this* “El” (God) differs from all the other “el’s” worshipped by the Canaanites in the land. Their attributes are reflected in the new names by which He is called. Here Abraham coins just such a new name, *YHVH El Olam*—**“Yehovah, the God who is Eternal.”**

***Genesis 22:2.** *“Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go forth, yourself (Hebrew: Lekh-lekha!) to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’”* The last time God used the words *Lekh-lekha!* (literally “Begin walking, yourself!”), was in Ur (Gen. 12:1). It was up to Abraham himself to begin moving—and then God guided him ‘in his going’, bringing him against all hope eventually into the far-away land of Canaan. Now Abraham is much older, and has walked with this God for many years and communed with him as a Friend. This is even more an obedience against hope—but by now this Man of Faith (who rejoiced to see Yeshua’s day! John 8:56) had come to believe in this God as the very “Resurrection and the Life.” In 22:5, he doggedly assures the young men with him that *“the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and WE will come back to you.”*

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.” (Hebrews 11:17-19).

***Genesis 22:7-8, 14.** *“Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ And he said, ‘Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ So the two of them walked on together...And Abraham called the name of the place “YHVH will Provide...In the Mount of YHVH it will be Provided.”*

In ancient Hebrew the word *yireh* could idiomatically carry with it an idea of “provision”. Yet literally it was then, as today, a form of the verb “To See”. **“God will see for Himself the Lamb”** (22:8); **“YHVH will see; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of YHVH it will be seen”** (22:14). God’s “seeing”, and our being “in His sight” is so important! We believe this to be a reason so much emphasis is placed throughout Scripture on the importance of dwelling **“in the light of His face”** (Psalm 44:3; 80:19)—**“seeking His face”** (Psalm 27:8-9)—**“finding grace in the eyes of the LORD”** (Genesis 6:8). If there is nothing coming between us and His face (the place of His “seeing”), all the *provision* for our journey will be there. Lastly, God had indeed “seen/provided the *Lamb*”. Isaiah 53:11 uses the same word— **“He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”**

***Genesis 22:13.** *“Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horn.”* We believe that here lies an important part of the significance of the *shofar* or rams’ horn. Here, caught by its horn, was the symbol of God’s Provision for all humankind--the ‘*Lamb of God which carries away the sin of the world*’. The sound of the *shofar* is a sound of the redemptive work and victory of the Lamb. When it is blown in the timing and authority of the *Ruah haKodesh* (Holy Spirit/Wind)...demons tremble, and the hearts of God’s army are strengthened and renewed with courage and joy!



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week 1-7 November are called *Chayei Sarah*—“Sarah’s Life”: TORAH: Genesis 23:1—25:18; HAFTARAH: I Kings 1:1-31]

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