

Prayer Update From Israel (October 29, 2013)

24 Cheshvan 5774



Well at the site of ancient Be'er Sheva

“Then he [Isaac] went up from there to Beersheba. And YHVH appeared to him the same night and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.’ So he built an altar there and called on the name of YHVH, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well (Genesis 26:23-25; see Torah Portion below).

1. “PASTOR CHUCK WAS OUR JONATHAN!” THE MESSAGE OF THE CONSUL GENERAL OF ISRAEL AT PASTOR CHUCK SMITH’S MEMORIAL.

We were touched by the address by the Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles, David Siegel, at last night’s memorial in Anaheim to Pastor Chuck Smith. The ministry of Pastor Chuck and Calvary Chapel changed the face of Christianity in America in the late 60s and early 70s—including revolutionizing the realm of worship and praise music throughout the Church. Many of the senior leaders in the Messianic community of Israel came to faith during those years—when the Spirit began moving powerfully in the hearts of Jews around the world, awakening revelation of their Messiah Yeshua, as well as an awareness of their identity as redeemed children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of their relationship with the Land of their Fathers. We are thankful for the testimony of Pastor Chuck – for his love and efforts on behalf of Israel, and for the fruit of that testimony as reflected in the address of Mr. Siegel at the Memorial. As you read his address, please thank the Lord with us! And ask the Lord to germinate the seeds of life and hope which were sown into Israel by Chuck Smith and the hundreds who joined him on his trips to bless the land and people of Israel!

Being a representative from Israel, a kid from northern Israel and a rabbi’s son, I’ve probably been to more synagogues and churches in my life, but I’ve never seen anything like this. You

know, Pastor was an amazing human being and he touched each and every one of you and of people around the world. His love for Israel was legendary, and as I was doing the research before speaking to you tonight, I found that he visited Israel over 60 times in his ministry. And when I said that to my teenager daughter today, I actually got her attention for the first time in a long time; she said, "Sixteen?" And I said, "No, sixty!" So, we're indebted, and we're deeply touched, and we join with you today to express our profound sadness and respect on behalf of the people of Israel for the passing of Pastor Chuck Smith. He was a giant of his time, a trailblazer and a visionary leader—and he worked for historic reconciliation between Christians and Jews. With his passing, the State of Israel has lost a great friend. Now in this time of mourning, we also recall his sacred legacy, and the enormous influence he had over all of us. In the sixty-five years of Israel's rebirth as a modern nation, one would be hard-pressed to find a more committed and more honorable friend than Pastor Chuck, a pioneer in forging relations between Christians and Jews, and between the Christian world and Israel. The bond he forged with us is comparable to the Biblical friendship between Jonathan and David. Pastor Chuck was our Jonathan! He was a true partner and a spiritual brother. The commitment he made to us is similar to the story of Naomi and Ruth from the Bible, who formed an alliance transcending the stormy divides of their time. Now, that relationship was symbolized by Ruth's powerful proclamation when she said, "Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God." In remembering Pastor Chuck, we recall a man deeply committed to our people and to our cause. Where we went, he went and where he ventured, we followed—united in our bond as the children of God. This is a man who made pilgrimages to Israel more than sixty times, leading large delegations and congregations, and always teaching the importance of friendship and solidarity between Christians and Jews. After centuries of division and persecution, and despite modern-day detractors, Pastor Chuck, like a beacon of hope in a raging sea, focused on reconciling our broken family. Perhaps, it's because he realized that Israel too, is a beacon of light in a stormy sea; that Israel, like you, is committed to repairing the world through faith, through strength, through good will, through technology and medicine and water and food; through humanitarian work as far away as Haiti where Israel was the first to set up a field hospital right after the devastating earthquake. To as near to Israel as Syria, where hundreds upon hundreds of refugees, many of them children, are being treated and cared by the Jewish state right now. Pastor Chuck, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, was a "watchman on the towers of Jerusalem". His faith and strength and conviction inspire us to continue charting our path towards peace and reconciliation. He was a visionary, pursuing a future and a vision of Christians and Jews standing together, arm in arm, committed on one another, each dedicated to carrying the burdens of the other. He understood that we are of the family, and we are of the same God; we're brothers and sisters united in a common cause of transforming and redeeming this broken world. Now, moving forward without his light and guidance will be difficult. But the foundations of Israel and of the United States are strong. And the foundations of our faith and our relationship to one another is strong. And we know that, come what may, we will stand together committed to the pursuit of justice and truth, committed to the legacy of Pastor Chuck. Now, while he's no longer with us on this earth, his legacy and spirit will live with us into eternity, and will guide our way. So tonight, Israel remembers Pastor Chuck Smith. And we say Shalom! Goodbye! to a very special friend, and pray that he will rest in the peace of the Almighty One. Thank you very much.

2. ENRICHED URANIUM FOR AN IRANIAN BOMB POSSIBLE WITHIN WEEKS?

In a *USA Today* report last week, David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security and a former International Atomic Energy Agency weapons inspector was quoted as saying that Tehran could be ready to construct a nuclear bomb in a month. Israel urged the U.S. to implement strong new sanctions passed by the House of Representatives in July. But after a round of negotiations between Iran and the U.S., Russia, China, France, Germany and the UK in Geneva earlier this month, and another scheduled next week on November 7 and 8th, a US State Department spokesperson in Washington told reporters that it was important to give diplomacy time to work before taking further action. Last week, Iran issued a statement that it had stopped enriching uranium at the 20% purity level—this week a senior Iranian lawmaker said it has not ceased the enrichment. Israel says whether it has or not is meaningless. Such enrichment is not necessary for a civilian nuclear energy program, and only points towards a desire to develop weapons. That Iran has this ability at all means that she also has the capability to shoot the enrichment up to a weapons-grade 90% in a matter of weeks. For Israel, the only solution is that enrichment stop at any level and the machinery be dismantled (See: “US Nuke Expert Albright: Iran Might be Month Away from Bomb: *NewsmaxWorld*, October 25, 2013 7:36 a.m.—AND --“Israel to US: Pass more sanctions, Iran could have material for bomb within weeks”: *JPOST.com*, 27 Oct 2013 8:50 IST).

PLEASE PRAY:

***That God will keep Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.**

***That clear intelligence reports will be obtained by the west accurately describing how far that development has progressed and the intentions of Iran’s leaders.**

***Wisdom, courage and clarity of direction and timing for Israel regarding the threat— from *Elohei-Ma’archot Yisrael* – “The Arraying-God of Israel” (I Samuel 17:45).**

***Direction and unction of the Holy Spirit for the Body of Messiah in Israel and in Iran in knowing how to pray.**

3. PUTIN’S PLANS

A *Sunday Times* report (“Putin cozies up to Cairo as US cools, 27 Oct 2013) suggests that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s plan for a possible state visit to Egypt may be for the purpose of warming connections with that country (even as American ties are cooling) so as to gain favor and possible access to Egypt’s Mediterranean sea ports. Russia only present access to the Med is via the Syrian port of Tartus, a privilege which could be endangered should the Assad government with which Moscow is allied, fall. The US in early October announced it would be freezing a large portion of the \$1.5 billion it annually grants to Egypt, chiefly in strengthening its military. This came after Egypt’s military leaders rose up and forcefully threw out the elected Morsi after his Muslim Brotherhood Islamist regime showed increasing evidence of a desire to enforce its ideals on the nation as a whole. Israel has repeatedly sought to influence the Obama administration away from reducing financial aid to Cairo. Israel’s treaty with Egypt, already

strongly weakened since the Arab Spring uprisings, was in large part connected with this aid. Should it cease, Israel will likely find herself sharing disfavor with the U.S. if not worse. And the prospect of Russia filling a void in Egypt left by the U.S., brings uneasily to mind the 2nd half of the past century when the Soviet Union was Egypt's chief backer, including militarily in such conflicts with Israel as the Yom Kippur War.

PLEASE PRAY:

***God's mercies on Egypt—whose people are in dreadful financial and humanitarian straits—that a way to prosperity will be revealed. That false hopes in false gods will be exposed, so that the redemptive promises of Isaiah 19:19-25 may come into being.**

***For the Body of Messiah in Egypt, that even as persecution has increased, so will they be granted boldness to speak the holy Word, that God will stretch out His hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of His holy Servant Yeshua ("Acts 4:29-30), and an upsurge of Believers will be manifest throughout the country.**

***That no alliances with death will be made or allowed to stand.**

***That the peace treaty with Israel will hold—that leaders from both sides will be granted will, resolve and guidance as to how to uphold it.**

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 27 October—2 November 2013 are called *Toldot*—“Generations”:

TORAH: Genesis 25:19—28:9

HAFTARAH: Malachi 1:1—2:7

(Machar Chodesh: I Samuel 20:18; 42)

***Genesis 25:22.** *"The children struggled together within her, and she said, 'If this is so, why then am I . . . ?' So she went to inquire of the LORD."* **Please pray for believers in Israel...that when faced with the perplexity of inexplicable conflicts (of which there are many in Israel), we would be quick to "go to inquire of the LORD" rather than leaning to our own understandings as to how to respond.**

Genesis 25:22-23.** *"The children struggled together within her...And the LORD said to her: 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger'."* **The struggle between the descendants of these two children would continue between Jacob and Esau (whose name would also be *Edom*). This was a spiritual struggle. God's hatred for the spirit working in Esau, which not only despised its own birthright, but also worked violence against the lineage of God's sovereign choosing on behalf of all humankind (Jacob) would be strongly expressed in the Book of Obadiah, *"Behold, I will make you small among the nations; You shall be greatly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you...For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever"* (Obadiah 2-3, 10). God is a God of love and life—attributes which manifest in holy hatred against all which would seek to thwart His life-covenants with the Children of Adam—"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:13). *"For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been"* (Obadiah 15-16). **Some see the spirit of Esau/Edom manifested in that which fuels the religion of Islam today—a religion which despises and harasses Jacob (Israel) as it drinks on God's holy mountain (before the Al Aqsa mosque upon the Temple Mount in Jerusalem) and binds other nations to drink from its lifeless spring).*

***Genesis 25:26.** *"Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Ya'akov (Jacob)."* **The letters of the Hebrew word translated "heel" also form the root of a word meaning "deceiver". Jeremiah 17:9 uses this same root, *"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can know it?"*. Jacob's life would be one of coming to know himself and the contents of His deceitful heart—and coming to know the God who loved and had chosen him, and Who, after his coming to know himself, would grant Him a new heart and a new name (Genesis 32:27-28).**

Genesis 25:29-34. *"Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, 'Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.' (therefore his name was called Edom), But Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright as of this day.' And Esau said, 'Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?' Then Jacob said, 'Swear to me as of this day.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright."*

Hebrews 12:14-17 (ESV). *"Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually*

immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.” **This passage suggests that Esau had come to be led by the desires of his fleshly appetites—placing those before the holy ‘right’ which had been bestowed on him by his birth. As we will see next week (28:16-17; 31:42), even with his failings Jacob had learned and acquired a respect for holiness and the fear of the LORD from his parents.**

***Genesis 26:2-5.** *“Then YHVH appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’”*

The LORD twice here promises to give to Isaac’s physical seed “all these lands”. This shows that although all believers are “descendants of Abraham” by faith (Galatians 3:7), the physical land would nevertheless be passed on through the physical descendants of his son Isaac. It is interesting that while the promise of blessing through Abraham in Genesis 12:3 extends to “*all families of the earth*”, the promise here to Isaac is that in his seed “*all the “nations of the land shall be blessed.”*” It is God’s desire not only to bring blessing to individuals but to communities and even nations through the life of the Holy One who would come through the seed of Abraham and Isaac!

***In Genesis 26, even with God’s promise of care and blessing (above), Isaac succumbs to the deceptive weakness of his father Abraham in pretending that Rebekah is his sister. Yet the Lord mercifully protects both of them as He has promised.**

WELLS

***Genesis 26:18.** *“And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.”* Isaac’s life is much associated with “wells”—from when his future wife Rebekah was revealed at one (24:45) and shortly thereafter he came from another to meet her (24:62), to the reopening of old wells and the digging of new ones recorded here in chapter 26.

PLEASE PRAY for the reopening of “wells”—of ancient sources of truth and blessing and song in returned Israel—as well as discovery of new reservoirs of understanding reserved for latter days (Daniel 12:9). Pray for rediscovery and proper identification of the well of “Righteousness through Faith” (Genesis 15:6); Pray that Israel will find and open again her true “Well of Salvation”...and come to know His Name. *“Behold, God is my salvation (Heb: Yeshu’ah), I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation. Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of Salvation”* (Isaiah 12:2-3).

***Genesis 26:19-22.** *“Also Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled...so he called the name of the well ESEK (“Exploited”, “deprived of”). Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also, so he called its name SITNAH (“Sataned”, “Accusation”, “Enmity”, “Adversary”). And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name REHOBOTH (“space”, “widenesses”), because he said, ‘For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.’”*

For over a hundred years the returned Hebrews have faced quarreling, exploitation, and deprivation over the land God has promised to them. As they have attempted to become rooted, and to re-dig the “wells” of their ancient homeland, they have continued to be accused by the world and to be surrounded by enemies and adversaries. PLEASE PRAY that more and more of returned Israel will come to realize that we will never “make room for ourselves” in this Land. Alone, we have no idea how to come into such a relationship with those already dwelling in the land as will quell the quarreling. We must turn in faith to our LORD, Who alone can “make room for us” (and those yet to come) to become permanently rooted and “fruitful in the Land”.

Genesis 26:23-24. *“Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.’” So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and He pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.”*

***Genesis 27.** Rebekah (as her mother-in-law Sarah had done before her) tried to assist the “word of the Lord” spoken over her sons and enters into a deceitful plan with Jacob to get the blessing of birthright placed upon Jacob instead of Esau. Yet God’s sovereign grace will work out His purposes, while bringing out of both of these sons a revelation of their motives and that in which they have trusted. Isaac will bless them both 27:27-29 and 27:39-40, but the blessing which Esau despised will be taken from him forever.

***Malachi 2:7.** *“For the lips of a priest should preserve and guard knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of Armies.”* Revelation 1:6 says that the One who loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood has made us into a kingdom of priests. As such, our *mouths* are of exceptional importance—guarding knowledge for release to those seekers with whom God will bring us into contact. The Hebrew word for “messenger” here is exactly the same as that often translated “angel”. Angels, as part of their services in the Armies of the LORD, are heavenly messengers sent to “minister to those who will inherit Salvation”. As priests before God we are often called to work hand in hand with these supernatural beings. PLEASE PRAY for a keen understanding of our responsibility as priestly messengers of God to His people—and that in the power of the Holy Spirit we move in step with His angels--while keeping a close guard on our tongues.



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week (3-9 November 2013) is called *VaYetze*—“And He Went Out”: TORAH: Genesis 28:10—32:2; HAFTARAH: Hosea 12:12—14:9]

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