

# ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

*Glory of Zion International Ministries*



## **PARASHAH – TOLDOT**



***“I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”***

**(Isaiah 46:13)**

### **1. LAST TUESDAY MORNING**

--as we were getting into our car, Norma’s eyes glanced over the valley from our apartment, and were caught suddenly by clouds of light coruscating across the sky from the top of Mount Zion. We have lived across the valley from the mountain for over twelve years, but have never seen anything quite like this; we were able to snap the cell-phone picture above; within a few minutes it was gone. Zion is mentioned over 60 times in the Bible: 40 times in the Psalms, 47 in Isaiah, 17 in Jeremiah, 30 in the Minor Prophets. Almost all of these passages deal in some way with Jerusalem or some part of Jerusalem, God’s love and plans for her and those dwelling there; or, the love of His children for Zion to which God is returning to reign! The meaning of the word Zion (Hebrew: *tzi'on*) is not certain—it may be related to another word *tzi'un* which is spelled the same way, and which means a “marker” or a “sign” (Jeremiah 31:21; Ezekiel 39:15). Certainly, God’s dealings with Zion/Jerusalem are often used as a sign to the nations!

**PLEASE PRAY:**

\* That the hearts of those dwelling in Zion be drawn to their God.

\* That His signs in the Heavens over her be seen and understood.

\* Below are only a small selection from the many references to Zion in the Bible. May they illumine us to pray *His Kingdom Come!* there—that the Body of Messiah there and in the nations be tuned to what His Spirit is saying to the Congregations... May He raise up *“shepherds according to [His] heart, who will feed [them] with knowledge and insight!* (Jeremiah 3:14-15)

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*“That I may tell of all Your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation.”* (Psalm 9:14)

*“Let Mount Zion be glad, Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments!”* (Psalm 48:11)

*“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth! Our God comes; He does not keep silence...the Heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge!”* (Psalm 50:2-3, 6)

*“Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad!”* (Psalm 53:6)

*“You will arise and have compassion on Zion; for it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come.”* (Psalm 102:13)

*“Blessed be YHVH from Zion, Who dwells in Jerusalem. Hallelu-Yah!”* (Psalm 135:21)

*“The LORD will reign forever, Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Hallelu-Yah!”* (Psalm 146:10)

*“Extol the LORD, O Jerusalem; Release High Praise to Your God, O Zion! For He blesses your children within you. He makes peace in your borders...”* (Psalm 147:12-14)

*“As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so YHVH of Armies will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill. Like birds hovering, so YHVH of Armies will protect Jerusalem; He will protect and deliver it; He will spare and rescue it...YHVH whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.”* (Isaiah 31:4-5, 9)

*“Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”* (Isaiah 40:9)

*“I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put*

*salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.” (Isaiah 46:13)*

*“‘Awake! Awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city...shake yourself from the dust and arise, be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!’” (Isaiah 52:1-2)*

*“And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 59:20)*

*“ ‘Return, O backsliding children,’ says YHVH, ‘for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and insight.’” (Jeremiah 3:14-15)*

*“The LORD roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to His people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. (Joel 3:16)*

*“The LORD roars from Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem...” (Amos 1:2)*

*“On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, ‘Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.’” (Zephaniah 3:16)*

*“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.” (Zechariah 2:10-11).*

## **2. SHAKINGS ON THE BORDERS OF IRAQI KURDISTAN.**



Kurdish flag, with the Mount of Olives in the background.

*As we write, reports are still coming in of a large earthquake (7.3 on the Richter scale) which struck during the night on the border between Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran. The quake, centered just southwest of the Kurdish town of Halabja, was felt throughout the Middle East, including Israel. News reports are predicting a large number of casualties, especially across the border in the heavily populated Iranian province of Kermanshah. This comes in the wake of other shakings which*

have been afflicting the Kurds in the region during the past few months.

The Kurds are an ancient people of Indo-European race, thought to be descended from the Biblical Medes. For thousands of years they have occupied an area centered in a crescent of land arching from eastern Turkey, around northern Syria, northeastern Iraq and northwestern Iran. An oft-persecuted race, they are the largest people group not to have held, for over 2000 years, personal sovereignty over the lands in which they have lived.

***And they are the one large people-group in this part of the world who have a long history of friendliness towards the Jews.*** This dates back to the conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC, when Hebrew captives were dispersed as far away as “the cities of the Medes” (II Kings 17:6). Others were added following the Captivity of the Southern Kingdom by Babylon a century later. In the early 1950’s, most of the Jews in Iraq immigrated to the newly established nation of Israel; but warm relations have continued between these two peoples. During the 1980’s, the Iraqi government under Sadaam Hussein sought to exterminate the Kurds. In fact, on March 16, 1988, Hussein ordered a poison gas attack, releasing mustard gas and sarin on the Kurds living in Halabja (the epicenter of last night’s earthquake), killing more than 5,000 of them. At the end of the First Gulf War, the United States established a safe-zone in northeastern Iraq, to protect the Kurds from reprisals by the Iraqis. Since that time, with the death of Hussein following the Second Gulf War the region has flourished. Erbil the capital of this now “autonomous zone”, has become a modern city. The dream of the Kurds there to eventually become an independent nation has been seen as well on the way to reality.

***They hold an ancient reputation for being a warlike people.*** In 2014, as ISIS began spreading its “Caliphate” through northwestern Iraq and headed behind retreating Iraqi soldiers towards Baghdad, it was the Kurds who stood firm along a 1000 kilometer front. And two years later it was their Peshmerga soldiers who were the vanguard for the US and Iraqi forces in taking back key areas, such as Mosul which had fallen to the Caliphate. Late last September, things took a different turn. The Kurdish leadership decided the time had come to hold a non-binding referendum to see if the Kurdish people of northern Iraq were ready for independence. Suddenly, the Kurds’ friends—including those with whom they had been battling a common enemy—began to distance themselves. Dark threats came from Turkey and the Iraqi government about holding the referendum. The United States and other western nations strongly urged them to put it off. In fact, only Israel encouraged them to go forward with it. The referendum was overwhelmingly passed by the joyous Kurds. Unlike what happened in Israel in 1948, this was not a declaration of independence, just a vote towards a direction. Yet, just as happened with Israel in that year, enemies began to mobilize. Turkey’s Erdogan began moving troops towards the northern border; issuing a sneering taunt, “See, no other nation is recognizing your referendum, only Israel. Will Israel save you?” The Iraqi government closed the Erbil airport, and mobilized troops—Shia militias led by Iranian Revolutionary Guards and backed up by Iraq’s 9<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. In a short time, the Kurds had been driven out of the areas they had taken and held during the war with ISIS, including the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. At present this little nation (which could not become a nation) is in disarray—her dreams of independence once again dashed, feeling abandoned by her friends for and with whom she fought. For the moment there is a shaky truce...but for how long? And who will stand with her, if the circling armies began to again advance? Presently Iraq and Iran, Syria and Turkey (abetted by Russia) appear to be resuming their old dream of a ‘crescent’ of Islamic power

north of Israel. Saudi Arabia is aware of this, and is seeking to strengthen its alliance with the US, and perhaps even (in a hidden way) with Israel as it sees its ancient enemy Iran spreading westward. Wars and rumours of wars are roiling over the Middle East—and in the center are the Kurds.

***Salvation and blessing are coming to Kurdistan.*** And an “independence” much deeper even than that which they have so desperately sought. Two years ago, the Lord released and repeatedly confirmed a prophetic word over this people—*Springtime for the Kurds!* There is a redemption at work in Kurdistan! God has promised that all nations (Genesis 22:18) will find blessing in the seed of Abraham; and that there will be a special blessing for all who show blessing to that seed! And Kurdistan, a land not under a curse for despising Israel, lies right in the middle of the region covered by the ancient kingdom of **Assyria**—a people and area which God promised would one day be called “*the work of My hands*”—bound together with **Israel** “*My inheritance*”—and **Egypt** “*My people.*” (Isaiah 19:24-25). In recent years, seeds for the awakening of that holy blessing have been sown into Iraqi Kurdistan, and they are beginning to sprout. Shortly after the end of the First Gulf War, the Lord sent believers into land—aiding the decimated Kurds, digging wells which had been destroyed, helping with education, and in the process sharing the life-giving truth of the Good News of *Issa—Yeshua—Jesus*. Perhaps it is because of the ancient teaching about a coming Messiah by the Jews who had lived among them for so long—but the veneer of Islam forcibly imposed upon the Kurds 1300 years ago seems much thinner today than that in other Islamic countries. They have begun coming to faith in the Savior and being filled with the Spirit much more rapidly than has been the case in other Islamic societies. Today there are Kurdish evangelists working among their own people; there are Kurdish songs of praise and worship being sung. It is a small light—but it has kept shining and is growing brighter. ***And as it comes into flame, it will shine out into the darkness of the surrounding nations. We believe that the Kurds will have a crucial and holy role in the salvation of the Islamic nations surrounding them!*** Meanwhile, believers from the nations continue coming into the land to serve and to pray. Today there are is a strong House of Worship in Erbil, with visitors from abroad (including Jerusalem) visiting it often.

## **Borders**

The present international tubulence is related to the borders of Kurdistan—its western and southern borders with Iraq, its northern borders with Syria and Turkey. The shakings last night were along the northeastern border with Iran. It is the God of Heaven who “*sets up the boundaries for peoples*” (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). It is He who “*makes peace in the borders of Jerusalem*” (Psalm 147:14)—and in the borders of those who love her. We are reminded of several years ago, when, at the height of the advance of ISIS across Syria and northwestern Iraq, our friend Rick Ridings received a vision regarding God’s “Re-drawing” of the maps of the region. Within that vision was the following regarding the Kurds—part of which has been fulfilled, and part of which we see continuing to be:

In the vision I received, I saw these “border angels” going forth in a focused way to the Kurdish autonomous area of present-day Iraq. They started pulling on and protecting borders. I saw an altar of prayer and worship to the Lord in the heart of this Kurdish region, where more and more stones were being added to it, causing the altar to be raised up higher and higher. Next I saw bulldozers and cranes carving a deep pool in this Kurdish region. I felt this was a reservoir being created to hold waters of the Holy Spirit...As things went from worse to worse in the ISIS-controlled areas of

present-day Iraq and Syria, I saw in the vision that the Kurdish region was protected and that the rains of the Holy Spirit began to fall upon their area and started filling their “pool” with the water of Life.

**PLEASE PRAY:**

**\* That God’s blessing of life, prosperity and hope would be renewed upon the Kurds in Northern Iraq; that He sustain them during a time of disappointment and loss; that the Father’s *Kingdom Come!* there.**

**\* That God protect their borders, and at the right time establish them as a nation. Pray that He raise the Kurdish people up to the redemptive purposes He has reserved for them to walk in in the last days!**

**\* That God raise up leadership there which will be led in His purposes and bring the people into unity. There are ancient party-divisions, which satan uses to awaken division whenever they find themselves no longer facing a common enemy.**

**\* That Israel remain a strong friend of her only ally in that part of the world—among whom she herself was a sojourner for so many centuries. That this friendship will be strengthened in faithfulness, protection and provision. That our leaders will know how to act righteously and decisively in regards to Kurdistan during the coming days.**

**\* That God remember the many other oppressed peoples whom the Kurds protect and succour within their midst such as the Yazidis, the Assyrian Christians.**

**\* That President Trump become aware of the crucial importance of his nation maintaining faith—and protection with the Kurds in northern Iraq. That other nations who stand with Israel will also stand with the Kurds.**

**\* That the seeds of Truth planted for centuries, and during the past few decades, come to fruition—that Believers from Israel and Egypt will be used of God to form a spiritual bond between their countries and Kurdistan in Assyria. Pray blessing, refreshing, insight and power over the House of Prayer in Irbil, Kurdistan.**

**\* That the Kurdish people throughout the world would be drawn to the light of Salvation, and come as a people into their heritage.**

**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 12-18 November 2017 are called *Toldot*—“Generations”:

**TORAH:** Genesis 25:19—28:9

**HAFTARAH:** Malachi 1:1—2:7

**\*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 Jacob and Esau (whose name would also be *Edom*) would continue; it is a spiritual struggle. God's hatred for the spirit working in Esau, which not only despised its own birthright, but also persisted in working violence against the lineage of God's sovereign choosing, 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).

We see strong similarities between the spirit of Esau/Edom and that which fuels the religion of Islam today—a religion which despises and harasses Jacob (Israel), even as it “drinks” on God's holy mountain (before the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem) and binds other nations throughout the world to drink from its lifeless spring. God hates the life-despising spirit and the system of death which it presently oversees. *But He loves the millions bound under this system—calling them to come out of it into His covenant of Life.*

**\*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 at the same time, of coming to know the God who nevertheless loved and had chosen him, the God who, after his coming to know himself, would grant to Jacob 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 from Hebrews 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 (Genesis 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 (Hebrew: zera—"seed") 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 and heirs of the promises" 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 to Isaac in last week's reading (22:18) and here 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!

**\*Genesis 26.** Here, 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 who is patiently mentoring both of these men into maturity in their faith, mercifully protects both them and their wives 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 he, shortly thereafter, came himself 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.

**\*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”, “wideness’s”), 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. By ourselves, 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 will “make room for us” (and those yet to come) to become permanently rooted and “fruitful in the Land”.

**Genesis 26:23-24; 26-29.** *“Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the YHVH (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 YHVH, and He pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.”*

Isaac has consistently given all the glory for his success (26:22, 25) to YHVH, the God taught to him by his father Abraham. His and his father’s testimony of *this* God have made a lasting impression on the Philistine king Abimelech:

*“Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar... “We have certainly seen that YHVH is with you...You are now the blessed of YHVH” (Genesis 26:26-29).*

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**\*Genesis 27. Rebekah attempts** (as had her mother-in-law before her) **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 him instead of Esau.** Yet it is God’s sovereign grace which will work out His purposes, in the process, 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 of birthright which Esau had despised will be taken from him forever.

### **HAFTARAH**

**\*Malachi 1:11. “For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Nations; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the Nations,” Says YHVH of Armies.** There is no clearer declaration of God’s great love *for all nations*. His ultimate purpose in choosing Abraham and making of him a “great nation” (Genesis 12:2), was that One would come through that nation in Whom All the World would be saved!

**\*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 heavenly messengers, the angels), while keeping a close guard on our tongues.**



***Martin and Norma Sarvis  
Jerusalem***

**[The readings for next week (19-25 November 2017) are called *VaYetzeh*— “And He Went Out”. TORAH: Genesis 28:10—32:3; HAFTARAH: Hosea 12:12—14:9.]**

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