

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (November 14, 2011)



Recent cloud formation over Jerusalem.

“Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God, Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains. He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry” (Psalm 147:7-9).

***WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PRAYERS.
TODAY THE RAINS CAME AGAIN.
HODU LA'ADONAI KI TOV, KI LE'OLAM HASDO!***

Give thanks to the LORD for He is Good, and His lovingkindness endures forever!!

1. THE IAEA REPORT IS RELEASED

Last Tuesday International Atomic Energy Agency released a report, claiming for the first time to have “credible evidence” pointing towards a conclusion that Iran’s nuclear activities are by no means focused exclusively on development of nuclear power for peaceful uses; it is now a virtual certainty that the focus is on production of a nuclear weapon. The uneasy speculation highlighted in last week’s Update regarding Israel’s intentions given these circumstances, has only increased this week. A fascinating and informative article in Sunday’s British Telegraph spoke of President Obama’s “alarm” at Israel’s refusal to bow to Washington’s demand last month that the White House be notified before any Israeli strike be made against Iran (Google: Israel refuses to tell US its Iran intentions). After examining a number of opinions pro and con about the possibility or effectiveness of such an attack, the article ends by stating a factor very real to Israelis, while of little concern to others: “In Mr Netanyahu’s eyes, Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is another “Hitler” whose aim is to complete what the Holocaust failed to do by wiping out the Jewish race. ‘People outside Israel don’t understand how profound memories of the Holocaust are, and how they affect future policy making...At the end of the day, this policy of “never again” would dictate Israel’s behavior when intelligence comes through that

Iran has come close to a bomb.” (“Israel refuses to tell US its Iran intentions”: Adrian Blomfield, The Telegraph; 7:49PM GMT 12 Nov 2011).

Meanwhile, an enormous explosion occurred this past Saturday at a military base 28 miles outside of Tehran, killing at least 17 Revolutionary Guards and being felt strongly in the capital. Among those killed was Brigadier General Hassan Moqaddam, whom one senior military official called “the main architect of the Revolutionary Guard’s’ canon and missile power and the founder of the deterrent power of our country.” This figure was so highly esteemed that Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei attended the ceremony mourning his death. The Iranians are officially calling the blast an accident occasioned by the repositioning of conventional explosives. Yet one western intelligence source told Time magazine that the Israeli Mosad was behind the explosion; and certain popular speculative sources are even claiming access to information that it was caused while a nuclear device was being placed on a missile. Sunday Prime Minister Netanyahu suggested to his government that Israel has information beyond that released by the IAEA report, “The IAEA’s report only detailed information that can be proven; facts that can be presented in court. In practice there are many other things we see, and hence the leading states in the world must decide what to do in order to stop Iran. . . The efforts thus far did not prevent Iran from progressing towards a bomb, and it is closer to acquiring it, sooner than what people think.”

IN LIGHT OF THIS, WE BELIEVE IT APPROPRIATE TO REPEAT THE PRAYER POINTS FROM LAST WEEK:

PLEASE PRAY:

*That Israel will move in the timings and purposes of God regarding a response to the threats coming against her from Iran. “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. . . a time for war, a time for peace” (Ecclesiastes 3:1,8b).

* That the Lord would “Scatter the peoples who delight in war” (Psalm 68:30b).

*That Israel’s leaders will look to the LORD as our rock, who trains our hand for war and our fingers for battle (Psalm 144:1). That they will realize, with David, that “the battle is the LORD’s” (I Samuel 17:47). During the flight of the jets which destroyed Saddam Hussein’s Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981, Prime Minister Menachem Begin spent the entire time pacing back and forth alone, deep in prayer.

*That the God of Abraham will be a shield around Israel (Genesis 15:1), that she will look to Him to protect her from fear of the “terror of the night, from the arrows that fly by day” (Psalm 91:5).

*That Believers in Israel will not be distracted from dwelling in the “secret place of Elyon (the Most High), abiding under the shadow of Shaddai (the Almighty)”—and that their faithfulness in this will draw others to desire to do likewise!

*That God would protect His remnant in Iran—from denying their faith in the times of persecution, and from destruction should war break out.

*That the godless leaders tyrannizing the people of Iran and cursing Israel would be replaced; that the bondage of a religion set against the covenant purposes of the Most High God would be broken.

*That revelation would be released among the masses of that enormous land that the God of Israel is a God of Love, and that He has sent a Saviour to free all Humankind from the bondage of sin and despair.

2. ALLIES, LEADERS, AND MUTUAL RESPECT

“Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops (Luke 12:3).

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes” (Psalm 118:9).

Last week it came to light that during the recent G20 summit in Cannes, French President Sarkozy and American President Obama, thinking the microphones in their meeting room had been switched off, had the following exchange: Sarkozy: “I cannot bear Netanyahu anymore, he’s a liar.” Obama: “You may be sick of him, but me, I have to deal with him every day.” Reporters who were witness to this exchange were asked by officials to sign a confidentiality agreement agreeing to withhold the report; but it eventually leaked out and reporters from AP and Reuters confirmed that it had taken place. As the story made it into the media, there was embarrassed silence from all official quarters; but Sunday Israel’s Yedioth Ahronoth reported that Mr Sarkozy has sent a personal letter to the Israeli Prime Minister related to the IAEA’s report, promising strong and close cooperation with Israel on the issue of sanctions against Iran, and then signing the note in his own handwriting (a gesture not common in diplomatic correspondence), “with friendship”. The White House released a statement to the affect that relations between Obama and Netanyahu are very good—in fact, that the President confers with Netanyahu more than with any other leader. Whether these will suffice, or there may be more verbalized official apologies forthcoming remains to be seen. For her part, Israel has chosen to take no official notice of the private exchange. We realize that leaders are human beings, and, as companions, apt to make loose, jocund remarks about mutually faced subjects of difficulty and perplexity. As one of Netanyahu’s deputies, Vice Premier Silvan Shalom remarked, “Everyone talks about everyone. Sometimes even good friends say things about each other, certainly in such competitive professions. So you have to consider the main things. Is Obama a friend of Israel? Is Sarkozy a friend of Israel? Is their policy a consistent policy of support for Israel? The answer to all of these questions is affirmative and, as far as I’m concerned, that is what’s important.” At the same time, to hear the leaders of two of Israel’s historically closest allies making remarks reflecting privately-held opinions of disrespect, even contempt for our leader, is painful and unsettling. It also says something about the honesty of their own oft-spoken public avowals of support and friendship.

PLEASE PRAY:

*That relations between France, the US and Israel would be strengthened.

*That the faux pas of these two world-leaders would be resolved amicably...and with a genuine humility.

*That Prime Minister Netanyahu would move graciously and in integrity...but, nevertheless, continue to move according to the integrity of his own heart—in honesty and truth, yet not being swayed by the opinion of man—even that of other leaders.

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. As we wrote last week, 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”—that is, 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 for 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” (Hebrew: chesid and emet), 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 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. An erroneous yet commonly held assumption among many western Believers that all inhabitants of modern-

day Arab nations are physical descendants of Ishmael and therefore “also children of Abraham”, besides lacking any Biblical or historical warrant, completely ignores the billions of physical descendants of the peoples who inhabited these regions long before Ishmael was born. Of course Ishmael’s and Ketura’s descendants exist amongst Arab peoples. But they are no longer distinct, and placing all Arabs into a “third category” from Jews and Gentiles, besides being historically 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. Arabs, physically speaking, are not “Ishmael” any more than are these other peoples. Again, we are speaking here of historical physical connections to the Patriarchs. And in saying it, we are in no way taking away from the true heritage and identity of the great Arab people group which God loves and is bringing to Himself.

Of course the Holy Spirit may make use of analogies regarding Ishmael. Since Islam (meaning “submission”) falsely teaches 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 (Including 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, to join the rest of the world in worshipping Elohei Yisrael—the God of Israel. Indeed, many believe that their return and submission to God’s true Covenant may be used to trigger a last-days awakening in the original people of the Promise, the Jews!



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week (20-26 November 2011) will be called Toldot (Generations). TORAH: Genesis 25:19—28:9; HAFTARAH: Malachi 1:1—2:7]

You may give to our work in Israel by donating [online](#) or by calling **1 (888) 965-1099** or **1 (940) 382-7231**.