

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (November 28, 2011)



Clouds over the Mount of Olives

“And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was positioned on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the messengers of God were ascending and descending on it.”

(Genesis 28:12. See Weekly Torah Portion below)

1. STAYING INFORMED: NEWS SOURCES FOR ISRAEL

Media: *All the means of communication, as newspapers, radio, and TV, that provide the public with news, entertainment, etc., usually along with advertising (Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition).*

WE CONSIDER IT MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT THE WORD “MEDIA” HAS BECOME A PEJORATIVE IN MANY CHRISTIAN CIRCLES. WITHOUT MEDIA, WE RESIDE IN IGNORANCE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRAY FOR THE MEDIA—THAT THE LORD RAISE GODLY JOURNALISTS INTO THE UPPER REALMS SO THAT LIGHT AND TRUTH WILL BREAK THROUGH WHERE DARKNESS AND FALSEHOOD HAVE HELD SWAY OVER ENTIRE SOCIETIES. PRAY FOR TRUTH IN NEWER VENUES SUCH AS INTERNET AND FACEBOOK. PRAY FOR SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT IN READING THE MEDIA AVAILABLE TO US...TO UNDERSTAND PROPHETICALLY WHAT IS GOING ON, TO BE AWARE WHEN FACTS ARE BEING MANIPULATED IN AN UNBALANCED WAY, BUT ALSO TO DISCERN WHEN A PARTICULAR WRITER OR NEWS SERVICE IS REFLECTING INTEGRITY.

It is not within the scope of our Updates to provide a regular news service from Israel (there are many excellent ones available). Rather, we are one of a number of ministries sharing certain specifics for prayer which may or may not be reflective of the various stories current in the national news. We believe, however, it is important to stay informed of the news related to Israel, and therefore wish to make available to you each year several resources for doing so over the Internet. A selection from 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 what they are likely to find on T.V., radio and in the news papers and magazines available in their

cities and countries. Be aware that although each of the following news services contain, in our opinion, excellent up-to-the-minute news stories related to Israel, some of them sources also include prominently positioned *opinion* and *commentary* articles. *HaAretz*, for example, a left-wing paper available in both Hebrew and English, places some of its most virulently outspoken commentators, with their photos, right alongside the news stories. Rarely are these commentaries not angry attacks on the present conservative government, its policies, and especially our Prime Minister. Sometimes, there can be value in perusing these commentaries, but one should be on one's guard. These are not "The News". As a rule, they more overtly reflect the leanings of the paper's staff than will the news articles themselves.

Most of the Israeli News Services now provide a running, continually updated stream of breaking stories.

We would caution you, however, 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.

A. ISRAEL NEWS SERVICES AVILABLE ON THE INTERNET.

The following four English news services provide a spectrum of political and ideological perspective. Each of these provide running up-to-the-minute 24/7 news bulletins. We think it important, probably particularly in Israel, to see from more than one perspective. In other words, do not discount a paper because it is considered "left wing". Although a paper like *HaAretz* may generally be expected to take a "liberal" very secular leaning regarding, for example, Israeli settlement in the contested territories of Judea and Samaria—on the other hand, in its desire to be seen as upholding individual "civil rights", it may well run a much more balanced and fair report related to "Messianic Jews" than say one of the more right-wing or religious papers which would stand up Israeli rights to the contested lands, yet be hostile towards Jews who believe in Yeshua (Jesus) as Jewish Messiah and Saviour.

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 slightly right-of-center politically.

HaAretz (English Internet Edition)

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

English version of a popular Hebrew paper. Left of center politically.

YNET News

www.ynetnews.com

Owned and operated by *Yediot Aharnot*, the largest-circulation Hebrew newspaper; available in both Hebrew and English.

Arutz Sheva

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

English-language new service from strong Orthodox Jewish perspective.

Israel Defense Forces

<http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/>

English-language news and updates from the Israel Military.

B. As regards English national or international news services, we would specifically call your attention to the Christian Broadcasting Network <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/> because of its excellent regular coverage of Israel. The CBN News Jerusalem Bureau is headed by Chris Mitchell, an experienced journalist of great integrity and a personal friend.

C. 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 other 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” under MEDIA, then clicking “ICEJ News Service”

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

www.bridgesforpeace.com

To receive **WEEKLY UPDATE SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION** visit the Web site and click on “Subscribe Now!” on the home page. On the right-hand will be a “Signup for FREE “Current News & Prayer Update” via E-mail. Each news item on this Update is followed by a Prayer Focus and an applicable Scripture reference. Their on-site description adds that they “continue to intersperse positive news items so that our message is not just crisis-oriented”.

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 *VaYetze*—“And (Jacob) Went Out”

TORAH: Genesis 28:10—32:2

HAFTARAH : Hosea 12:12—14:9

THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION BEGINS WITH JACOB’S FLEEING FROM CANAAN AND ENDS WITH HIS RETURN 20 YEARS LATER, A SOBERED AND MUCH DIFFERENT MAN, FINALLY PREPARED FOR A CRITICAL MEETING (NEXT WEEK’S PORTION) IN WHICH HE WILL BE BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH HIMSELF AND HIS GOD AND COMMISSIONED WITH A NEW NAME INTO THE CALL OF HIS DESTINY

***Genesis 28:10-12.** *“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night...Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was positioned on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the messengers of God were ascending and descending on it.”* The place where Jacob “comes to” is generally considered to be the same place where his grandfather Abraham, after leaving Shechem, had pitched his tent, built an altar to YHVH and called on His name. It is a place to which it seems probable he had returned repeatedly over the years (Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4). Is it possible that Abraham’s prayers, and perhaps those of his son Isaac, had opened a passage into the heavens above that dark land, a ‘portal’ still open when Jacob arrived so many years later...that here, in fact, a place of meeting, of encounter, of “intercession” had been made? The word “intercede” means *“to come between in time, space or action”* (OED). As often pointed out by American author and teacher Dutch Sheets in his classic studies of intercession, the root Hebrew word is *paga*: *to meet, encounter, to come across; to strike a mark; to light upon*. All of these terms may be applied to intercessory prayer. But there is a deeper application. In Isaiah 54:12 an “active” form of *paga* is applied to the suffering and anointed Messiah who *“bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* Hebrews 7:25 further speaks of this One who *“always lives to make intercession for”* those who come to God through Him. The point here is not that He is ‘praying’ for us, but that He has bridged “time, space and action” (see above), establishing an eternal way for us ourselves to come into the presence of the Father.

It is interesting that when here in Genesis 32:11 Jacob “comes to” a certain place where he will experience an incredible unexpected encounter with God...the Hebrew root for “coming to” is *paga*. And as He sleeps in this place, a ladder appears “standing in the gap” between Heaven and Earth with heavenly messengers ascending and descending this connection “between time and space”. This same word will again be used when he again encounters heavenly messengers upon his return from Haran (32:1).

***Genesis 28.13-15.** *13. “And behold, YHVH stood above it and said: ‘I am YHVH God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your seed. 14. Also your seed shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread out (Hebrew: burst forth/break out) to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”*

Bethel, the location where this meeting takes place and to which the LORD’s declaration immediately pertains lies just north of Jerusalem, in the heart of the area within which much of the world is demanding establishment of a permanent Islamic state. The land which God has here specified He will give to Jacob’s seed, the present Palestinian government claims as its own and has sworn will contain no Jews (i.e. Seed of Jacob) once it gains total sovereignty. We see such an arrangement as a violation and affront to the Word of the LORD spoken in verse 13; as such, it will never be allowed to

prosper. Since this entire passage deals with the “seed/descendants” of Jacob, we see verse 15 as referring not only to Jacob during his sojourn in Syria, but also prophetically to his future “seed”, a people bearing his future name Israel, which would be scattered around the world, but watched over by the LORD, and finally “*brought back to this land*”—a people whom He “*will not leave until He has done that which He spoke*” to Jacob on this site some 4000 years ago.

***Genesis 29:31.** “*When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.*” The Hebrew word for “unloved” here, is literally *hated*. It is the LORD who sees this hatred and moves to bless Leah (29:31). The names given to the children born to Leah or to her and Rachel’s maids mostly reflect different aspects of the alienation and rivalry brought about through the deception of Laban in forcing Leah on Jacob before Rachel. It is significant that in naming her fourth child, Leah chooses not to continue focusing on her plight, but rather on praising the LORD who is obviously showing to her the love her husband seems incapable of giving. “Judah” (Hebrew: *Yehudah*) means “praise” and has as a root the word *yad*—referring to arms or hands, which from ancient times were raised as a gesture of praise and thanksgiving to the Most High. The most-used Hebrew words for “thanksgiving” or “giving thanks” also have this as their root. It is noteworthy that towards the end of Jacob’s days, one senses affection towards Leah as he demands that he be buried alongside her in the Cave of Machpelah (Genesis 49:31). By the time of the Judges, both Leah and Rachel would be honored with a blessing, one still spoken over daughters on the eve of the Sabbath in many Jewish households: “*The LORD make [you] like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel*” (Ruth 4:11b).

***Genesis 30:27 (NASB).** “*But Laban said to him, ‘If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account.’*” The fact that Laban uses this word “divined”—a verb form of the name used of the Serpent (*nakhash*) in Genesis 3:1—might suggest that he regularly resorted to occult practices when seeking guidance or making decisions. Both the NKJV and NIV translate *nachash* “sorcery” in Numbers 23:23: “*For there is no sorcery against [or “in”] Jacob.*” The pagan occult gods stolen by Rachel from her father (perhaps brought from Ur by Nahor) will prove a snare and breach in the protection of the family when they arrive in Canaan. Yet there is not to be “sorcery/divination in Jacob”; and already he is learning to listen to the God of His fathers for guidance (including even the unusual way in which he causes Laban’s flocks to reproduce to his favour. Genesis 31:10-13).

***Genesis 31:42, 53.** “*Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night*” “*And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac*” (Emphasis ours). Although not nearly so much is recorded regarding the life of Isaac as of the other Patriarchs, these two verses suggest that this one who had allowed himself to be laid by his father on the altar at Moriah, who had loved to “meditate in the field” near the “*Well of the Living One Who Sees Me*” (Genesis 24:62-63), this “quiet” patriarch had learned and lived the “fear of the LORD”. And his doing so obviously had an effect on the spirit of his less-than-upright son Jacob. Even at the beginning of his flight from home, Jacob had exhibited at least some capacity to sense and respond to the numinous: “*And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!’*” (Genesis 28:17).

***Genesis 32:1.** “*So Jacob went on his way, and the messengers of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, ‘This is God’s camp.’ And he called the name of that place ‘Mahanaim.’*” In

English, we use the word “angels” to refer to *heavenly* messengers. In Hebrew the word for these “messengers of God” and for the human “messengers” whom Jacob will send to meet Esau in 32:3 are the same, *malakhim*. *Mahanaim* means “two camps”. Perhaps it was because here there was a coming together of a human and a heavenly camp. As mentioned earlier, the word for the “meeting” of Jacob with the heavenly messengers bears a root which is the same as that of “intercession.” Even as at his setting out he arrived unwittingly at a place of intercession between heaven and earth, here, on his return he once again has a meeting with heavenly beings. Unbeknownst to him, he will very soon find himself wrestling through the night towards a “break through” with God, not only on behalf of his own future, but on behalf of a people and nation through whom will come blessing for the entire world.

***Hosea 14:1-2; 4-7 (ESV).** *“Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, ‘Take away all iniquity; accept what is good...’ “I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.”*



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week (4-10 December 2011) will be called *VaYishlach*—“And (Jacob) Sent”. TORAH: Genesis 32:3—36:43; HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21]

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