

Prayer Update From Israel (November 30, 2015)



The King of Beasts in a Jerusalem Zoo.

Surely the Lord YHVH does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to his servants the prophets.

A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"

(Amos 3:7-8; See Torah Portion below).

1. THE VISIT OF THE COPTIC LEADER TO ISRAEL.

This week the head of the Egyptian Coptic Church Tawadros II visited Israel. It is the first visit by a Coptic pope to Jerusalem in 183 years. There are over 9 million Coptic Christians in Egypt (in a population of over 57 million). The church traces its history to the arrival of St. Mark in Alexandria in the first century, around a dozen years after the Lord's ascension. Within half a century, Christianity had spread throughout Egypt. With the Arabian conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, the Copts continued to be allowed to practice their faith with relative freedom for around four centuries, a freedom traditionally attributed to Mohammed's Egyptian wife who supposedly admonished him, "*When you conquer Egypt, be kind to the Copts for they are your protégés and kith and kin.*" (Encyclopedia Coptica). However, by the end of the 14th century, the tide had turned, Egypt had become a mainly Islamic country, and persecution of the Coptic Christians had awakened. It continues today, reaching a modern peak at the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt—especially between 2012 and 2013 during the short-lived presidency of Muhammad Morsi. But not only the Islamic Brotherhood. In February of this year, 21 Egyptian Copt laborers in neighboring Libya were captured by ISIS terrorists, marched

out to a beach and beheaded, crying out the name of Jesus in unison as the knives were poised at their throats.

Tawadros' predecessor Shenouda III, under pressure from Muslims to oppose normalization with Israel, issued a directive at the time of the 1979 peace treaty, forbidding Copts making pilgrimages to Jerusalem (unless accompanied with Muslims, which of course would not take place). However, Tawadros's visit, to attend the funeral of an Archbishop in the Holy City, went in the face of this directive. Observed one analyst, "*While the Church will attempt to portray the Tawadros visit as different from the pilgrimage, no one will buy that line. The pope must have known clearly that he will pay a political price for his visit, but as he has shown since he became pope in 2012, once he is convinced of the soundness of a decision, he takes it disregarding the political costs.*" ("Coptic Pope Tawadros's Jerusalem visit 'will create huge firestorm in Egypt': *JPOST.com*, 27 Nov 2015, 12:00 IST). Another analyst quoted in *The Post* article just cited, suggests that Tawadros's visit may actually have had Egyptian President Sisi's sanction. Sisi's government (supported by the Copts) has made significant efforts to overcome the oppression by the Muslim Brotherhood against the Church. The government is also maintaining behind-the-scenes intelligence relations with Israel in regards to the terrorist war being waged by ISIS in the Sinai. (Ibid.).

Tawadros' breaking of the ban on visiting Jerusalem will likely be seen as traitorous by many in Egypt, where, since the 1967 and 1973 Wars, there has been a general anti-Israel bias throughout the nation. But Jerusalem has always had a special place in Copt's hearts as a place of pilgrimage, with some continuing to arrive in Israel each year, despite the ban. It is expected that many may now see the pope's actions as opening up an avenue of new freedom for making that pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage to Jerusalem—but not to the Jews. The Coptic Church, while enduring its own persecution, has a dark history from early days (certainly *not* received from Mark!) of intolerance, hostility and persecution towards Jews. It is an ancient blind spot that the Lord must take away for these Christians to come into their appointed place. It is interesting that the Church has historically considered itself the subject of a number of O.T. prophecies—including Isaiah 19:19: "*In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border.*" (Encyclopedia Coptica). But that prophecy culminates in a "highway" between Egypt and Assyria (parts of modern-day Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran), with Israel in its center, its people recognized as a special Inheritance of the LORD(vs 23-25) .

The writers have just returned from a trip to South Africa, and can affirm that there is a networked body of believers there who are convinced that the preparation of the southern end of that Highway is underway—that it will work its way through that continent, with Egypt finally being awakened into its inheritance as "His People" and a holy positioning of the LORD.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That the present leader of the Coptic Church Tawadros II would not only be "convinced of the soundness of his decision" to break the ban to visit Israel—but would receive divine**

revelation regarding the “people” God has chosen to return to that land to be its overseers. Pray for revelation leading to repentance for anti-Semitism in the very blood-line of his church. For realization that for Egypt to come into her call as a “People of God”—she must come into line with God’s view of the people Israel as being “His inheritance.” (Isaiah 19:25).

*That a new revival would sweep the Coptic Church of God—delivering from ancient religious structures and mind-sets, developing new wine-skins capable of receiving the Spirit in measures which will lead these people into the love, power and patience necessary for fulfilling their call in days ahead.

*That relationships between prayer houses in Egypt and Israel would continue to warm and be strengthened. That God bless the comings and goings of believers between these two nations.

*That warming relations between the leadership of Israel and Egypt would hold. Pray for Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. That they would move in the timings of God. Pray for protection from the devices of Satan set against the redemptive purposes of the nations over which they have been placed as 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 7-13 December 2014 are called *VaYeshev*—“And He Settled”:

TORAH: Genesis 37:1—40:23

HAFTARAH: Amos 2:6—3:8

This week we begin the story of Joseph and his brothers

***Genesis 37:11.** *“His brothers were jealous of him [Joseph’s prophetic dream], but his father kept the matter in mind” (NKJV).* A more literal rendering of the Hebrew might be: *“but his father guarded the word.”* (Luke 2:51 tells how Miriam (Mary) similarly “kept,

guarded” the prophetically significant words and occurrences which were taking place with her young son Yeshua).

Both the Torah and Haftarah for this week focus upon God’s prophetic gifts for His people, particularly as they are and shall be released upon the godly young (See also Joel 2:28-32). As the Lord returns to Zion with deliverance and an outpouring of His Spirit,

PLEASE PRAY for mature instruction in the prophetic amongst Israelis—when and how to share prophecies and dreams; how to “guard” and save a Word of the LORD until its time comes to fruition; also how to guard against giving place to the flesh which can awaken jealousies towards those who may be more gifted in certain areas than we are.

***Genesis 39:8-9.** *“But he refused [his master’s wife’s seductive advances] and said, ‘Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house...he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?’”*

PLEASE PRAY for clean minds and hearts and the Fear of the Lord in believing Israeli youth who are under constant temptation to compromise their integrity and sexual purity. Revelation 14 speaks of 144,000 who will not have defiled themselves. Perhaps there are presently some of that army already alive in the land! If so, the Evil One will of course do all he can to divert them from their destiny. Pray for a new wave of bold and victorious youth and young adults governed by godly integrity—who would like Joseph have hatred of the very thought of sinning against their neighbor and their God.

***Genesis 40:8.** *“And they said to him, ‘We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.’ So Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.’”* Joseph’s rhetorical question is answered centuries later by another godly young Hebrew captive, Daniel, *“But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets...”* (Daniel 2:28).

***Amos 2:6.** *“Thus says YHVH, ‘For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver...’”* This is the usual reason given for the choice of this passage as the week’s *Haftarah*, the connection being the selling of the righteous Joseph by his brothers to Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver (Genesis 37:28). Yet in a strange way, the following verses also make a connection: *“A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge...”* **Genesis 38** relates how a most *un*-righteous Judah would (unknowingly) go in to the same woman as had his older sons...leaving a signet, cord and staff as pledge.

In this story we see many ways in which the righteous Joseph prefigures Yeshua, the coming Messiah. He here remains pure in the face of temptation, even though it will mean suffering. On the other hand, Judah, through whose seed the Messiah will someday come, is immediately seen as one enslaved to desires of his fallen human nature. God would work sovereignly through even his sinful failures (Judah will, in fact, later acknowledge his unrighteousness—38:26; 44:16), so as to guard the passage of the seed He had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to

bless. Over 800 years later, a blessing over Naomi (Ruth 4:12), will be “*May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this [Ruth] young woman!*” That “offspring” would eventuate in David the King...and finally, Yeshua, the Hebrew Messiah and Savior of the World.

****Amos 2:11-12; 3:7-8. “ I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?’ Says the LORD...Surely the Lord YHVH does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?”***

PLEASE PRAY for the raising up of sons and daughters in Israel who move confidently and soundly in the prophetic giftings. Pray for the restoration of the office of “Prophet” in the Land. Satan hates this—because the spirit of prophecy involves “*the testimony of Yeshua*” (Revelation 19:10b), and most of Israel is still behind a veil regarding their Messiah. It is this gift and office which brings clarity, understanding, instruction and encouragement to the Body regarding “*what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.*” **We rejoice to report that we see this gifting beginning to manifest in a powerful and clean way among Jewish and Arab young adults in the Land. Pray Joel 2:28-32 over this young eager generation:**

“...I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughter shall prophesy...For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as YHVH has said, among the remnant whom YHWH calls.”



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[The readings for next week (6-12 December 2015) are called *MiKetZ*—“At the End Of”: TORAH: Genesis 41:1—44:17; HAFTARAH (Hanukkah): Zechariah 2:10—4:7.]

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