

## *Prayer Update From Israel (November 4, 2013)*

*1 Kislev 5774*



*“Exalt the LORD our God, and worship towards His footstool—He is Holy...  
Exalt the LORD our God, and worship towards His holy hill; For YHVH our God is holy”*

**(Psalm 99:5,9)**

**Photograph from the window of *Succat Hallel* in its new facility south of Jerusalem. In the foreground is the Ben Hinnom valley; the Kidron Valley and Mount of Olives are to the right, the Temple Mount in the center.**

### **1. THE SUCCA HAS MOVED!**

**There are many wonderful and varied ministries the Lord has raised up in Jerusalem during these days, each with its unique specific positioning and call. We would like to devote this Prayer Update to one such work which has been in existence now for almost fourteen years, and for the past nine set on a rampart (Habakkuk 2:1) overlooking a particular prophetically-significant area of the city. This month the Lord is shifting this ministry’s place of assignment to a new position of oversight on the wall, and it is in need of your prayers!**

As we observed during the recent fall feast of Succot, a *succa* (tabernacle) is a small temporary shelter or dwelling. *Succat Hallel* (Tabernacle of Praise) began many years ago as the vision of Rick and Patti Ridings for a house of continual, corporate worship and intercessory prayer to be raised up in Jerusalem at a location as near as possible to the place where King David placed the Ark of the Covenant under a tent in the City of David (I Chronicles 16:1, 4-6), stationing Levites round it to “*minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise YHVH God of Israel*”. After receiving the blessing of several recognized Messianic leaders in the city, *Succat Hallel* was established in Jerusalem in January of 2000, with its initial oversight team (among them, the writers of this Update) consisting of believers from both Israel and the Nations.

For over four years we were located in a community south of the Old City called *Givat Hananiya*—“The Hill of God’s Favor”. “Worship watches” took place several hours a week in various homes on the hill, eventually centralizing in the facilities of a nearby ministry which graciously invited us to make use of its venue. There, the number of weekly watches increased, while night watches were begun in another rented location. In the fall of 2004, a location on Hebron Road on the edge of the Ben Hinnom valley across from Mount Zion became available for lease, and *Succat Hallel* moved in. Within two months watches were being led round the clock. From that date, nine years ago this month, there has been continual ministry, day and night, rising to the Lord.

### **The Ben Hinnom Valley**

The first place that the *Valley of Ben Hinnom* is mentioned in Scriptures is Joshua 15:8, where it formed the northern border of the ancient tribe of Yehuda (Judah), which means “Praise/Thanksgiving” (see Torah Portion below). During the latter reign of Solomon and throughout most of the years of the Kings, evil invaded the valley and it became a place of idolatry where abominable practices took place (I Kings 11:7, II Chronicles 28:3). Children were sacrificed to the god *Molekh* to the thunder of drums. In Psalm 150:4 drums are listed among instruments to be used in praise to the LORD; but in this valley their sound was usurped for a demonic use—to whip the worshippers of *Molekh* into a violent frenzy, and to drown out the cries of the dying children—so that another name for the valley became *Topheth* (almost certainly drawn from the Hebrew name for drums, *toph*). In Jeremiah 7:30-34, God at last pronounced judgment over the valley: it would no longer be called *Hinnom* or *Topheth*, but rather a “*Valley of Slaughter*”, because of the dead bodies which would fall there. By the time of Yeshua (Jesus) it was a place outside the city filled with burning rubbish. Its former Hebrew name *Gei-Hinnom* (Valley of Hinnom) had given way to the Greek *Gehenna*, a euphemism for a place of continual torment—Hell (Mark 9:47-48; James 3:6).

**BUT GOD!** There was another prophecy over this valley. In Jeremiah 31 (the same chapter which introduces the “New Covenant”), God promises a day when “*the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes* (i.e. the Ben Hinnom), *and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the horse Gate toward the east, shall be HOLY TO THE LORD!*” (Jeremiah 31: 38-40).

For over nine years *Succat Hallel* has been situated on this “northern border of Judah” (“*northern border of Praise!*”), overlooking this cursed valley which God has proclaimed will nevertheless become “*holy to the LORD.*” Praise and worship has been continually rising from the hundreds of believers from many countries who have visited, some coming for a few days, others for months, while the number of Israelis on staff from different congregations around the city also has increased. The worship has been in different languages and expressions (including dance), as has the intercessory prayer. Even the sound of the *toph*, stolen so long ago for the purposes of hell, is now heard over the valley, redeemed back to its original purpose in bringing glory to God. ***Might the prophecy of Jeremiah 31 finally be beginning to come to pass?*** We can’t be certain—and if so, the presence of *Succat Hallel* would only be one part in bringing it about. Yet, it is interesting that during the years since worship began being released over the valley, the city has come in and cleaned it up, planted trees, and the dark dirt road which once led

down to the Kidron Valley has been widened, paved and lighted. A community of 19 apartments just eastward along the edge of the valley which stood uncompleted and empty for years is now almost completely occupied with believing families. Students from all over the world come to take part in the internships, and in recent years close connections have been made with other houses of prayer being established across the Middle East. Each year *Succat Hallel* sponsors a special summer conference called *Elav* (“Unto Him”), which brings together hundreds of Jewish and Arab teens and young adults from both Israel and the contested territories for a time of worship, teaching and corporate seeking of the Lord. As we write, a CD of new Hebrew and Arabic praise and worship songs, spawned by these *Elav* conferences, is being recorded in the secular music studio located on the floor of the valley. ***How our faithful God has Blessed!***

### **THE SUCCA IS MOVING!**

***As mentioned above, the nature of a succa is that it is temporary and may be required to be re-located, even within a very short period of time.*** Much has happened very quickly, and the past two weeks have seen *Succat Hallel* pull up stakes and set them down again in a wonderful new location. It still overlooks the Ben Hinnom Valley—but is further down, and now the view from the worship room includes the Mount of Olives on the right and the Temple Mount in the center (see picture above). We see this as being much more than a mere change of location with the acquisition of a more scenic “view”. God’s purposes in this are yet to be revealed, but we believe it to be a divine “re-positioning” of significance, regarding the prophetic proclamations and worship which will now be being released “*towards His holy hill*” (Psalm 99:9). John Hamill of Lamplighter Ministries in Washington, D.C., who spoke recently at *Succat Hallel*, sees especial significance in the two mountains, which now lie within view from the worship room: The Mount of Olives: “*the mountain of Gethsemane, of agonizing, world-changing intercession for redemption. The mountain where Jesus ascended to heaven’s Throne, and where His feet will again touch as He descends in His great return. Agonizing in prayer, ascending to the Throne, descending in power—this is our path too.*” And the Temple Mount: “*where Jesus—Yeshua—will set up His everlasting Throne and rule the nations! Can you imagine the weight of the intercession necessary to birth this expression?*”

As mentioned at the beginning, *Succat Hallel* is only one of a number of houses of prayer and worship which God has raised up and is raising up in Jerusalem. These also are strategically placed, some as well in full view of the Temple Mount. Like the stone in Zechariah 3:9, there are many eyes seeing and guarding from many perspectives.

As *Succat Hallel* moves into her new positioning for a new season (the *Hanukat-Beit*—“Dedication of the House” is this Monday evening),

### **PLEASE PRAY:**

\* For God’s grace and mercies in guiding each part of this work safely and securely into its new berth.

\*For continued provision of the necessary personnel of God’s choosing to minister to Him night and day (Isaiah 62:6) from this “wall of Jerusalem.”

\*Vision and spiritual discernment in the leadership in guiding and guarding the direction of this ministry before the Lord. That it will work arm-in-arm in harmony with other similar ministries which God has raised up in the Land.

\*For angelic guardianship – that *Succat Hallel* remain in favor with its neighbors, and that there be divine protection for those coming to and from the facility, especially during the night hours.

\*For the Holy Spirit to be poured out in clear and timely revelation—releasing creative and inspired worship “in Spirit and in Truth”. That prophetic declaration and proclamation release God’s purposes on Earth as it is in Heaven.

\*That all the financial supply necessary to lease and maintain this facility and ministry for the coming year be released. That this *succa* will hold its place for the full length of time appointed for it in its new place of positioning.

\*That God’s Kingdom come: regarding the Ben Hinnom Valley (it will truly become “*Holy to YHVH*”); the Mount of Olives where Messiah shall return; and the “Holy hill of Zion” where Yeshua shall reign (Psalm 2:6) and on whose heights “*all the house of Israel, all of them in the land*” shall serve Him (Ezekiel 20:40). That all who dwell in darkness within the view of the windows of *Succat Hallel* will receive mercy and light of the revelation of the true God and of His Son!

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### **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 3-9 November 2013 are called *VaYetze*—“And He 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 BOTH**

## 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.”*

It is remarkable that here in Genesis 32:11, as Jacob “comes to” a certain place where he will experience an incredible, unexpected encounter with God, the Hebrew root used for “coming to” is the same as that used for the word “intercession”. 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 encounters heavenly messengers upon his return from Haran (32:1).

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 appears probable that Abraham had returned repeatedly to Bethel over the years (Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4). We would suggest that Abraham’s worship and prayers, along with perhaps also those of his son Isaac, had here opened a passage into the heavens above the dark land of Canaan—a holy ‘portal’ still open (with angels ascending and descending) when Jacob arrived many years later. It was a place of meeting, of encounter, where *intercession* had been made. The word “intercede” means, *“to come between in time, space or action”* (OED). As pointed out by American author and teacher Dutch Sheets in his classic studies of intercession, the Hebrew root 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 53:12 an “active” form of this word 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 to come ourselves into the presence of the Father.

**\*Genesis 28.13-15.** *“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. 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. 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 descendants (the “seed”) 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*, will 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 before.

**\*Genesis 29:31.** “*When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.*” The Hebrew word for “unloved” 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, thanksgiving, confession to the Most High. It is noteworthy that towards the end of Jacob’s days, one senses a deep affection had finally awakened 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 Hebrew word *nakhash*, translated “serpent” in Genesis 3:1—may suggest that he regularly resorted to occult practices when seeking guidance or making decisions. Both the NKJV and NIV translate *nakhash* “sorcery” in Numbers 23:23: “*For there is no sorcery against [or “in”] Jacob.*” The pagan occult gods stolen (Genesis 31:19) 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 Jacob 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 favor. Genesis 31:10-13). And He hears when the LORD says to him, “*Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you*” (31:3). 20 years before, this YHVH had promised a much less-mature Jacob, “*I am with you and will guard you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.*” Now, as a humbled and wiser Jacob faces the Land with mixed emotions, YHVH promises for this next part of his journey, “*I will be with you.*”

**\*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 had an influence 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*—the presence of the *Holy*: “*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, *mal’akhim*. *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 (10-16 November 2013) are called *VaYishlach*—“And He Sent”: TORAH: Genesis 32:3—36:43; HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21]**

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