

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (November 7, 2011)



Recent clouds forming 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).

1. FORMER RAINS

Israel, both the people and the land, rejoiced this week as rains finally began to descend over the region. In Israel the “Former Rains” begin in the fall (on the last day of the Sukkot celebration there are special prayers for rain), and the “Latter Rains” normally arrive with the Passover season in the spring. Then it stops. From mid-May to mid-October it is rare to receive rain anywhere in the middle-East. After a few short showers just before Rosh Hashanah, we have received virtually nothing at all until now. Then Friday night it began to thunder, and by the next morning they rains had come! By Saturday evening the Sea of Galilee had risen a half-centimeter and snow had fallen on Mount Hermon. After these long six months the hills around Jerusalem are still brown—but today we noticed little pink squills opening up in the dry grass on “Bible Hill” near the Begin Center on Hebron Road; we are so very thankful! Last year the Former Rains were practically nonexistent, continuing drought conditions which had already existed for several years. Praise the Lord, His Mercies endure forever!

PLEASE PRAY:

*That the former and latter rains will be substantial in Israel this year. That there will be snows on Mount Hermon and that the Sea of Galilee and the underground aquifers would be refilled. *We also continue to pray Isaiah 41:17-20...that as Israel acknowledges her need of water, it would be provided in unexpected places that we “may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.”

2. “WILL ISRAEL ATTACK IRAN?”

Speculation in the media as to whether Israel is planning a preemptive strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities is certainly nothing new; in fact, it has come to be expected that about twice a year there will be reports that such an attack is eminent. This past week there has been a new wave of such speculation, as the International Atomic Energy Agency is expected in a few days to announce evidence that Iran is in fact within the last, critical stages of developing an atomic weapon (Recent satellite photos reveal a huge steel container at a military base about 30 kilometers from Tehran capable of serving as a testing chamber for carrying out experiments with detonators and other explosives related to nuclear weapons). This week newspapers carried reports supposedly leaked from high-level sources, indicating that Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak are engaged in serious preparations for launching an attack. Friday Israeli President Peres voiced his belief that Israel and the world are approaching a military option, and the same day saw a senior US military official stating that the US is “absolutely” concerned about the possibility that such an Israeli attack may soon take place without prior consultation with the US. The Russian Foreign Minister, whose country is the nearest thing to a major power ally Iran has, warned that there is “no military solution to the Iranian nuclear problem”, and any strike on Iran will result in soured ties between the West and Russia. And Iran responded to the rumors by vowing that “before being able to take any action against Iran, the Israelis will feel our wrath in Tel Aviv.”

How much is mere speculation, how much information purposely and strategically released to the media in ways calculated to disguise the true state of circumstances we can’t be sure. What seems certain to Israel is that the nation of Iran has accelerated its program to develop a nuclear weapon along with the means necessary for delivering it (It has been known for some time that Iran has obtained key components for such a weapon from North Korea). And Iran’s leaders continue to voice not only threats but rhetoric appearing to reflect actual intentions of having a part in causing what it calls “the Zionist Entity” to cease to exist.

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.

3. GREECE

It was announced Sunday that Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou will resign after a new coalition government is formed. The new government is to be in place until elections are held in early spring. For months Greece has hovered on the brink of bankruptcy, and this past week saw the situation becoming critical. Leaders in the EU have been working desperately to come up with a “bail-out” plan for their fallen member—but the austerity measures necessary for imposing an effective plan have resulted in chaotic outbreaks of lawlessness across the land. A default could pull down other European economies (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland are especially vulnerable), which in turn could severely disrupt economies around the world.

During the past year, the leadership of Greece has made strong overtures of friendship towards Israel. Even as our relationship with Turkey has cooled drastically, that with Greece has warmed. Among other things, this warming has resulted in plans reportedly beginning to be discussed whereby Greece might become a key partner with Israel in the export to Europe of resources from the vast petroleum deposits discovered off of Israel’s northwest coast. Now, with the meltdown in her economy and the dissolution of her government, these bright hopes are distressingly being replaced with uncertainty.

PLEASE PRAY:

*Integrity, order, courage and prosperity over the nation of Greece.

*That friendship between the two countries would be maintained during the dark and desperate days through which Greece is passing. Pray that leadership will come into place which sees the importance of maintaining close relations with Israel.

*Against a rise of anti-Semitism in Greece. An emaciated economy with imposed austerity measures and rampant poverty often give rise to lawlessness...and these are circumstances in which the enemy has historically found fertile soil for planting seeds of accusation against the Jews.

*The blessings of the New Covenant Letters to the Corinthians to reawaken in the Body of Messiah in Greece. For the Church there to come out of the delusion of “replacement theology” and realize that praying for and blessing God’s purposes for Israel will return blessing upon their own land and people.

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 VaYera (“Appeared”).

TORAH: Genesis 18—22:24

HAFTARAH : II Kings 4:1-37

***Genesis 18:1, 3.** “Then the LORD [Heb: YHVH] appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door...three men were standing by him...he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’” John 8:56, 58. YESHUA (JESUS):“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad...Before Abraham was, I AM.”

*There is no clearer example in the Hebrew Scriptures of God taking on human form; He “appeared” to Abraham. When Abraham sees Him and runs to greet Him, it is to someone he recognizes (Remember, God had “appeared” to Him at least three times before—Acts 7:2; Gen. 12:7; 17:1); also, by this time he had certainly come to recognize the “Word of the LORD”

coming to him (Gen. 13:14; 15:1). Abraham approaches the three men, but to One he says, “My Lord...” However, instead of using the normal Hebrew word Adoni (Lord/Master/Sir), the vowel points of the text show that he used the word Adonai—a pronunciation used only for Deity! And in the ensuing conversation, both with Abraham and with Sarah, it is made abundantly clear that it is the LORD with whom they are speaking (The other two ‘men’ are obviously angels, who will soon release destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah). PLEASE PRAY for believers in Israel, that, from inclining our ears to His voice and seeking His face, we become so familiar with our Lord and His messengers that we recognize their presence when they move among us. And pray that in our busy-ness we “not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2).

*The LORD appears to him by the terebinth trees at Mamre—which is Hebron. Hebron is related to the word for “friendship” or “companionship”—implying a close association. Some see Hebron, not Jerusalem, as being the true place of Hebrew “identity.” It was here that the Lord in human form and Abraham ate and talked together as friends. The city would have holy significance for the Hebrews from this time on. All of the Patriarchs would be buried there. The evil one would try and take it over during the 400 years that Israel was in Egypt, but Caleb would rip it away from those giants when he and Joshua finally brought their people into the land. It would be here that David, at the instruction of the Lord, set up his kingdom for the first seven years of his reign. Jews continued to dwell in Hebron until modern times, when an uprising and massacre took place there in 1929. In 1967 Hebron was taken by Israeli troops without firing a shot. Sometime later, a contingent of brave Jewish women marched in and occupied a place inside of the city; another Jewish settlement was built outside. In 1997, in obeisance to the Oslo “accord,” occupying Israeli troops finally pulled out of the city (some continue to be stationed there to guard the tiny enclave of Jews and to insure access to the Tomb of the Patriarchs). Liberal governments have pushed for Israel to simply yield up the city and pull out of it altogether; until now, that has not happened.

The Muslim religion looks at Hebron as the birthplace of one of its leaders. It has sought to resolve discrepancies between its teachings and those of the Bible by holding that the Hebrew Scriptures alter the ancient accounts, that in fact Ibrahim [Abraham] was the first Muslim, and Allah’s covenant came through Isma’il [Ishmael]. In fact, today (November 7th), Muslims celebrate the feast of Eid al-Adha, commemorating the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice Isma’il. Presently the spirit behind this religion, like the giants of Arbah in ancient times, holds Hebron in its grip. And the Jews living in and around Hebron, although showing great courage and devotion, at times manifest their zeal in a violence not far-removed from that of those they perceive as their enemies surrounding them.

PLEASE PRAY: that the timings and purposes of the LORD will be released in Hebron “on earth as they are in Heaven”. Pray for a Great Light to illumine both Arab and Jew in their communities in Hebron, the light of the Most High God who desires to have a friendship with all the sons of Adam. Pray against the spiritual strongholds of cruel violence (Hebrew: hamas) which seek to hold both Jew and Arab captive in this city. Pray that national Israel will not come to despise her birthright, which includes this city of the burial place of her Fathers.

***Genesis 18:14.** “Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” [Jeremiah 32:17-18. JEREMIAH: “Ah, Lord YHVH! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great Power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too wonderful for you...the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is YHVH Tzeva’ot.”]

***Genesis 20:6-7.** “And God said to him [Abimelech] in a dream, ‘Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live....’” PLEASE PRAY: that although surrounded by peoples who are often hostile to us, we would make allowance in our hearts for the grace and lovingkindness of our God for all men and women of every nation, remembering that He is not willing that any should perish. Pray that we will not stereotype those in the peoples and nations around us, but be sensitive and ready to pray restoration and prosperity for those upon whom God through us may choose to rest His grace and mercy.



Bedouin tent and camels in the desert near the site of ancient Beersheba.

“Thus they [Abraham and Abimelech] made a covenant at Beersheba...then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of YHVH, the Eternal God”
(Genesis 21:33)

***Genesis 22:7-8.** “Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ And he said, ‘Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?’ Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ So the two of them walked on together.” Genesis 22:14. “And Abraham called the name of the place “YHVH will Provide...In the Mount of YHVH it will be Provided.”

In ancient Hebrew the word yireh could idiomatically carry with it an idea of “provision”. Yet literally it was then, as today, a form of the verb “To See”. “God will see for Himself the Lamb” (22:8); “YHVH will see; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of YHVH it will be seen’” (22:14). God’s “seeing” and being “in His sight” is so important! We believe this to be a reason

so much importance is placed throughout Scripture on the importance of dwelling “in the light of His face” (Psalm 44:3; 80:19)—“seeking His face” (Psalm 27:8-9)—“finding grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:8). If there is nothing coming between us and His face (the place of His “seeing”), all the provision for our journey will be there. Lastly, God had indeed “seen/provided the Lamb”. Isaiah 54:11 uses the same word— “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”

***Genesis 22:13.** “Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horn.” We believe that here lies an important part of the significance of the shofar or rams’ horn. Here, caught by its horn, was the symbol of God’s Provision for all humankind--the ‘Lamb of God which carries away the sin of the world’. The sound of the shofar is a sound of the redemptive work and victory of the Lamb. When it is blown in the timing and authority of the Ruah haKodesh (Holy Spirit/Wind)...demons tremble, and the hearts of God’s army are strengthened and renewed with courage and joy!



Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem

[The readings for next week (13-19 November) will be called Chayeh Sarah (Sarah Lived). TORAH: Genesis 23:1—25:18; HAFTARAH: I Kings 1:1-31]

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