

## ***Prayer Update From Israel (December 19, 2011)***

Dear Friends of Israel:

Below is our weekly Prayer Update from Israel from Martin & Norma Sarvis. They begin with a wonderful section on Hanukkah, which begins tomorrow evening. Also, to help you better understand Hanukkah, Christmas and our Messiah, you will want to listen to Robert Heidler's message from yesterday morning on "Hanukkah: Celebrating Restoration and the Miracles of God!" Through Wednesday evening you can watch the free webcast replay by clicking [HERE](#).

Additionally, Amber Pierce sent a video from Jaffa of people protesting the government's attempt to pass a bill to prohibit prayer calls over loud speakers. Click [HERE](#) to watch this video. Let's decree that only the Lord's sound will penetrate Israel.

Blessings,  
*Chuck D. Pierce*



### **1. HANUKKAH BEGINS TUESDAY EVENING**

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word meaning "dedication". The eight-day Jewish celebration bearing that name (it is also called the Festival of Lights) remembers the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been recovered by the Jewish forces of Yehuda Maccabee in 164 BC. The Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a forerunner of the Anti-Christ, foretold in Daniel 11:21), seeking to coerce Jews into abandoning their religion and culture for that of Greece, had issued edicts forbidding circumcision, observance of Jewish Sabbaths and feast-days. He had defiled the Holy Temple by offering a sow on the altar and raising up in the Sanctuary a statue to Zeus. As depicted in the First Book of Maccabees (an account of Jewish history found in the Apocrypha),

a revolt was launched by the priest Mattathias and later led by his son Yehuda (Judas) Maccabee. It led to the defeat of the Syrian forces, and the defiled Temple was cleansed and re-dedicated. Another account relates how during this cleansing there was only enough sanctified oil left to burn in the menorah for one night—yet a miracle occurred and it continued burning for eight days. The victorious warrior Yehuda ordained “that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Kislev, with mirth and gladness” (I Maccabees 4:59).

John records how Yeshua/Jesus was walking in the Temple on Solomon’s Porch during the Festival of Hanukkah in Jerusalem (John 10:22). It was during this season that he chose to speak of himself as “The Good Shepherd” who “lays down his life for the sheep.” And, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” (John 10:27-30 ESV).

Today, part of the celebration includes the use of a special eight-branched menorah upon which a new oil lamp or candle is lit each evening. Each light is ignited from the flame of a separate “branch” called shamash—“servant”. Remarkably, the Haftarah reading for this Saturday within Hanukkah, besides containing, as might be expected, a menorah (See Torah section below), also includes the following words, “Behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.” Although a different word for servant is used here, there is no doubt that it refers to the Servant-Messiah, sent by the Father—the Light Inextinguishable, who illumines all coming into the world (John 1:9).

***Hanukkah—the Feast of Dedication—the Festival of Lights is a season for***

\*Allowing the Holy Light of the Spirit to shine within ourselves, revealing any idolatry or uncleanness which may have defiled our bodies (which are the Temple of the Holy Spirit) and removing it. Of re-dedicating our bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

\*Dedicating our ears to listen for the voice of our Shepherd (John 10 above).

\*For surrendering our selves anew to the infilling of the Holy Spirit whose anointing comes from an inexhaustible supply.

\*For letting our “lights” shine brightly in the darkness—reaching out and joining with those of other believers. A popular Israeli Hebrew Children’s song for Hanukkah is called BANU HOSHEKH L’GARESH (“We have come to drive out darkness”):

***We have come to drive out darkness, in our hands light and fire:  
Each of us is a small light, but together we are a strong, steady light.  
Flee Darkness in the Blackness—Flee before the Light!***

---

## **2. ACTION TO REQUIRE TRUTH REGARDING MESSIANIC JEWS IN THE MEDIA**

We are grateful for the positive response to our recent article related to Believers' and the news media—the importance of praying for, rather than reviling it, of being selective in what we make use of in order to be informed; of praying for discernment in what we see, hear and read. We would add, the importance of on occasion doing what is necessary to require accountability regarding accurate reporting from news services.

This week we have seen an encouraging example of this coming into play here in Israel. Most of our readers will be aware of a terrorist attack which took place in Ariel on March 20, 2008 against a family of Messianic Jews [i.e. Jews believing in Yeshua (Jesus) as Hebrew Messiah and Saviour]. 15-year old Ami Ortiz picked up a Purim gift basket left on landing of his family's apartment. Hidden inside was a powerful bomb which exploded in his hands. For weeks and weeks Ami's life hung in the balance. But he survived and began a truly miraculous recovery from the terrible wounds he suffered. (This spring he will begin college and has been accepted on the basketball team!) The investigation which followed the attack dragged on and on. It was finally released that a security camera on site showed the bomb being planted by what seemed to be an Orthodox Jewish man. In 2009 an arrest was made of Jack Teitel, an American-Israeli Orthodox Jew, who confessed to this and a number of other terrorist acts, including two murders.

During these years, through the many reports in Israel's news media related to the Ortiz attack, the name "Messianic Jew" for the first time began to find its way into the national consciousness; some of the articles included detailed reports about who they are and what they believe. Before this attack, many news services considered it 'politically incorrect' to use the name "Messianic Jew" (partly, one assumes, from a desire not to be seen as going counter to the received Orthodox teaching that belief in Yeshua cancels out one's Jewishness).

The Enemy is still set against Jews both outside of and within Israel becoming aware that there is a vibrant growing body of Believers here! This is often reflected in the Israeli English-language news services, which are read by thousands of Jews over the Internet each day. On December 7<sup>th</sup> it was released to Israeli media that Jack Teitel is mentally competent to stand trial. Teitel is the American-Israeli Orthodox Jew who has been indicted on 14 charges, including two murders, and who has confessed to delivering the bomb to the Ortiz residence. Yet when the story came out in Ynet news, although the Hebrew version mentioned the Ortiz family amongst Teitel's alleged victims, the English edition made no mention whatever of the Messianic family. An emergency call was sent out to believers throughout Israel and around the world to contact the news service protesting this omission. Within an hour the English article had been amended to reflect the Hebrew article: "He was also indicted for attempting to murder the son of a Messianic family living in Ariel when he sent an explosive device disguised as a Purim gift to their home."

That day the English-language Jerusalem Post article did mention the attack in Ariel. Yet, while identifying the alleged terrorist as an American-Israeli, the Israeli victims were referred to as "American Christian Missionaries." This was condescending and grossly misleading to say the least. For many Israelis the word "missionary" brings to mind a non-Jewish Christian (usually Roman Catholic) with no respect for Jewish ideals or traditions, sent to steal the souls of Jews by

illegally offering them money for conversion. David and Leah Ortiz responded with a brilliant letter to the Post, pointing out that they were in fact a Jewish family with six children who had lived 26 years in the Land, contributed to the society, been in the armed forces, and who as Jews believed that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah. They mentioned the international scope of friends who have arisen to support them since the critical wounding of their son; how many of these individuals and organizations, who relied on the Post for their tourism and activities, and did business with their sponsors, had written in response to the article to voice their disapproval, feeling that it not only was offensive to the Ortiz's, but to them as well. These groups, individuals and organizations were awaiting a statement from the Ortizes...but the Ortizes would await the Post's correction of the "improper reporting."

Shortly thereafter, the editors of the Post indeed responded by publishing the following:

### ***APOLOGY***

In "Court says Teitel fit for trial" (December 7), it was incorrect to call the Ortiz family of Ariel "American Christian missionaries." They have dual American-Israeli citizenship. The mother and her children are halachically Jewish, and not Christian, although they believe in Jesus as the messiah, placing them in the category of "Messianic Jews." Also, we should have pointed out that while some have alleged that the Ortizes engaged in missionary activity among Jews, there is no proof of this. We apologize to the family.

Through prayer and acting together in solidarity as believers, an important modification was made in faulty and damaging news reportage in Israel; truth which would have been suppressed or distorted was required to be released and honestly clarified. The Post's Apology, contained more than a statement of mere regret; it in fact bore a remarkable, perhaps precedent-setting statement proclaimed by editors of an internationally circulated newspaper—that halachically Jewish persons who believe in Jesus as the Messiah fall into the category of "Messianic Jews." Although it is certainly true that few who read the original articles will have seen the amendment or the Apology, voices have been heard, influence has been brought to bear, which will, we trust, have a positive effect on the future journalism of these papers.

### **PLEASE PRAY:**

\*That what was accomplished through these two instances of Believers challenging faulty journalism in the media will result in permanent changes in policy as regards future coverage of Messianic Judaism in these news services.

\*That Jews throughout the world will become aware that there is a growing, thriving body of Jewish citizens in Israel who are believers in Yeshua.

\*Courage and unction to care about truth in the media in our nations, enough to pray and to act when led by the Holy Spirit.

---

### **3. ANNUAL HANUKKAH ISRAELI YOUTH CONFERENCE**

This coming Sunday (December 25<sup>th</sup>) begins the annual two-and-a-half day Katzir (Harvest) Hanukkah Youth Conference. This gathering for worship and prayer, teaching, small-group discussion and group recreation is now completely indigenous. Over 100 Israeli teens will come together from around Israel. The leaders are mostly young Israeli adults who were once involved in these conferences during their teens, have now come through the military and into their higher education or careers—yet have a desire to help and bless those coming behind!

The theme this year is “To be LIGHT”

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

\*For the speakers to share exactly what the Spirit is desiring to say to the youth of Israel at this time.

\*For the young adult leaders who lead and speak into the lives of these youth, for love and authority and unity in the Holy Spirit, wisdom, and patience; and that they also be edified as they minister in this important way to those rising up behind them.

\*For lives to be changed so that the teens attending develop an ever deepening relationship with the God and Messiah of Israel.

\*For God’s angels to protect this conference/retreat from interference by the enemy—and for protection as the young people return to their homes.

\*For the Holy Spirit to bring what has been released during the Conference to life in these teens after they return to their schools.

---

#### **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 MiKetz—“at the end [of two full years]”)

**TORAH: Genesis 41:1—44:17**

**HAFTARAH (Hanukkah): Zechariah 2:10—4:7**

**\*Genesis 41:1; 15-16.** “Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream...And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.’ So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of shalom.’”

**PLEASE PRAY:** That the LORD release dreams into our secular leaders—which can only be interpreted by those whom He has prepared. Pray that the Lord raise up young men and women who will be filled with His Spirit, and who will be able supernaturally (in this rationalistic age) to give our Prime Minister and other leaders “an answer of Shalom.”

**\*Zechariah 3:2.** “And the LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’”

**Revelation 12:11** points to a time when the Accuser will be overcome “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” We infer from this Zechariah passage that part of that “word of testimony” may include a linking of the name of the LORD with his choosing of Jerusalem. An acknowledgment and confession of the LORD’s covenant link with Jerusalem will release a power to silence the Accuser in the last days!



***Martin & Norma Sarvis  
Jerusalem***

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (25-31 December: Vayiggash—“and [Judah] approached”) will be: TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28]

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