

Prayer Update From Israel (December 2, 2013)



Hanukkah 5774

THE “ABOMINATION WHICH MAKES DESOLATE” IS A MODERN-DAY MANIFESTATION BEGINNING TO STIR?

15 KISLEV 167 BC

In this year, Antiochus IV of Syria, having visited Jerusalem two years before, and in a zeal to force Hellenistic culture throughout his dominions, issued an edict demanding that Jews in that region be forced to abandon the essential practices of their religion; these included circumcision and observance of Jewish Sabbaths and feast days. On the **15th of Kislev** he erected a statue of Zeus Olympius in the Holy Place of the Temple and ten days later desecrated the altar by sacrificing a pig upon it. Three years later to the day, Jewish forces under Yehuda Maccabee having taken the garrison at Jerusalem and cleansed the Holy Place, dedicated the Temple anew. The Hebrew word for “dedication” is *hanukkah*, and it is this particular Hanukkah which we are celebrating this week. Most of the information we have about this comes from the book of I Maccabees, an account written in Hebrew towards the end of the 2nd century BC, but surviving only in the Greek translation found in the Septuagint. Although not part of the Biblical canon, it is generally respected as a historical source. The erecting of the *Abomination of Desolation* (or, *Abomination which Makes Desolate*) is chronicled in I Maccabees 1:54-59: ***“Now the fifteenth day of the month of Cislev, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and built idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side...”*** (Emphases ours).

350 YEARS BEFORE

Three and a half centuries earlier, a forewarning of this had been given to Daniel in Babylon: ***“In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not***

been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue...So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery..." (Daniel 11:21, 30b-32a). There can be no doubt that this passage refers initially to the desecration which took place in the Temple in Jerusalem in 167 BC. However, with verse 36 the time frame appears to shift, to leap ahead towards a future, different manifestation. By verse 40, we are into "*the time of the end.*"

AND 200 YEARS LATER

Yeshua/Jesus is speaking to His disciples outside this same Temple (now greatly aggrandized by Herod the Great): "*At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains..."* (Matthew 24:10-16). Yeshua's words, spoken two centuries after the first "Hanukkah" shows that imbedded within the Daniel 11 passage lay indeed prophetic warning of a manifestation reaching far beyond that which would take place during the days of Antiochus IV. Some have seen included here a short-term warning for the Jews when Titus would arrive to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. This may be valid, yet before this chapter comes to an end, it becomes clear that Yeshua is speaking primarily of a time shortly before He returns "on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." We can therefore conclude that another manifestation of the *Abomination of Desolation*—perhaps the one towards which all the others were but harbingers—will be set up before the time of the end.

15 KISLEV 2012 A.D.

(Recognition)

On the 29th of November last year-- the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to pass *Resolution 67/19*, recognizing as a non-member observer "state" an entity called Palestine. This entity claims as its own the regions of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and East Jerusalem (including the Old City and Temple Mount). **Last year on the Hebrew calendar the 29th of November fell on the 15th of Kislev.** We are not saying that an "abomination which makes desolate" was set up on that date. But we are pointing out that the 15th of Kislev credibility was granted by an organization purporting to represent the desires of all governments of the earth for a territorial entity to now consider itself a *nascent* (coming into being, though not yet completely formed) "state". This "state" encompasses the lands under contention in the times of Antiochus IV, with its center the Holy Place in Jerusalem. As in 167 B.C., the overseers of this entity (a different people from those of the Covenant) demand that another god be worshipped there (including the site of the ancient Temple itself), and persecute severely any who worship otherwise. Not only would the region be made desolate of the worship of the God

of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, its prospective leaders have continually avowed, even during the past year, that once it is finally set in place, its territories will be completely *desolate of the Jewish race*.

15 KISLEV 2013 A.D.

(Stirrings)

On Tuesday November 19th of this year-- Israelis awakened to the following headlines:

“‘State’ of Palestine casts its first UN ballot” (*The Times of Israel*); **“Palestinians cast first-ever vote in UN General Assembly”** (*ynetnews.com*). The *ynet* article read, “*A routine UN General Assembly vote held special significance for the Palestinian delegation on Monday as it cast a ballot for the first time, an act the Palestinian envoy said brought his nation a step closer to full UN membership”* (Emphases ours). The *Times* article observed, “*It was the first time that a Palestinian “state” voted in the General Assembly, almost a year after the 193-nation body elevated it to non-member UN observer state...*”

But it was not “almost a year” according to the Hebrew Calendar. *The vote was cast on November 18th, which on the Hebrew calendar was to the day one year after the first UN vote, again the 15th of Kislev.*

And so—what came into being on this significant date a year ago, has on the same date a year later begun to stir, its first “baby steps” reportedly rewarded with a “warm round of applause.” And more. **Eight days later, on Tuesday of last week (26 November) the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in six resolutions, and declared 2014 to be a “Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.”** (“UN condemns Israel 6 times, declares ‘Year of Palestine’: *The Times of Israel*; 27 November, 2013, 5:56 a.m.).

We are not at this time asserting categorically that the Abomination of Desolation of the Final Day is upon us. But for an evil to have been established and begun to move in such exact cadence with a corresponding evil from the past we take to be no mere coincidence. Something has shifted, a pace is quickening, and something is coming into being of a seriousness which the Spirit would awaken into our awareness.

KNOW! BE STRENGTHENED! DO!
CONVEY INSIGHT! GIVE UNDERSTANDING!

I Chronicles 12:32 speaks of sons of Issachar in David’s day, “*who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.*” But **Daniel 11:32-33**, foretelling a time of gathering darkness when the *Abomination* will be revealed, breaks free from that tribe, extending their capacity to a wider populace and to a deeper level: “***But the people who know their God will display strength and DO! Those among the people with a capacity to receive and convey insight will give understanding to the many***” (Literal translation, Emphases ours.).

WE REPEAT HERE THE PRAYER POINTS WE GAVE A YEAR AGO (December 3rd Update, shortly after the 15th of Kislev vote). WE BELIEVE THEM TO BE OF EVEN MORE PERTINENCE TODAY. AS WE SEE THE PACE QUICKENING, ASK GOD TO GRANT YOU ADDITIONAL INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING!

PLEASE PRAY:

***For integrity and wisdom for Israel’s leaders to ‘know what to do’ now that the UN decision has been made. *“Who is the man who fears the LORD, He will instruct him in the way he should choose”* (Psalm 25:12).**

***For Believers in Israel and in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza to be strengthened with courage, vision, and understanding (Daniel 11:34-35 above).**

***That God’s Kingdom advance quickly in Israel at this time, that evangelism awaken and discipleship rise up amongst Jews and Arabs while there is still time.**

***Psalm 2 and Zechariah 1:14-17; 2:5 over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.**

***Ezekiel 36 over the “Mountains of Israel” (i.e. Judea and Samaria).**

***Zechariah 9:5-7 over Gaza.**

Zechariah 2:12-13. *“And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Hush! All flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

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As the UN has countenanced a “Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”—pray for Palestinian Arabs living in the contested territories, that many be rescued from deception by an enemy who hates them, and come to the God who loves and has a future for them. The Arab believers in the territories are among the most persecuted for their Faith in the Middle East. Pray that among them there rise up those who “know their God”, who will display strength and DO what needs to be done.

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 1-7 December 2013 are called *Vayiggash*—"And [Judah] Approached":

TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28

***Genesis 44:18; 46:28.** *"Then he [Judah] drew near to him [Joseph]..."* There is no question that the story of Joseph and his brothers provides a prophetic picture of Yeshua/Jesus and His "own" (i.e. the Hebrew people) who rejected Him—but to whom He will one day be revealed as "risen from the dead" to provide salvation. In a special way He loves them with an everlasting love and "draws" them with loving kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). In His grace, many are already "drawing near" to God, confessing their sin and inadequacy as did the brothers (At the close of last week's Portion Judah confessed: *"How can we make ourselves righteous... God has brought out the iniquity of your servants!"*). As they do so, Yeshua, like Joseph, miraculously reveals Himself to them! (Zechariah 2:9, 11).

PLEASE PRAY: for more and more in Israel to be led in God's kindness to repentance and to respond to His call to "draw near."

***Genesis 44:20, 30-34.** *"We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.'... 'Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.'"* Twenty-two years earlier, the jealousy and hatred in their hearts towards Joseph had calloused the hearts of the brothers towards their father's feelings; they greatly dishonored Jacob when they abused the son he loved, and brought back a false report of his death. "It is the Lord's mercies which lead us to repentance." We now see a genuine tenderness has developed towards the feelings of their Father. Malachi 4:5-6 tells of a day when God's prophetic word will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers before the coming of the "great and dreadful day of YHVH."

***Genesis 46:28.** *"Then he (Jacob) sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen."* Beginning in Chapter 43 and more strongly emphasized here, the mantle of leadership shifts from Reuben to Judah. From here on, a special precedence will be given to this tribe—"Judah goes first"! From Jacob's blessing regarding a scepter of royalty (Gen. 49:8); to leadership of the armies marching towards Canaan (Numbers 10:14); to the securing of the land in the time of the Judges (Judges 1:2), to the Kingship of David; to the birth of the Messiah in the City of David; to Zechariah's prophecy of the Last Days when *"The LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem"* but *"will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory*

of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah” (2:12; 12:7)—God has chosen that this tribe shall lead.

There is much of significance which may be drawn from this...but perhaps the most immediate point would be related to the name itself which Leah gave at his birth—*Yehudah* (Judah). The word means “*Thankful praise expressed by the raising of the hands*”.

PLEASE PRAY: for a fresh awakening of thanksgiving and praise amongst the Body in Israel, awareness that this must come first (II Chron. 20:21-22). It is thankful praise which will lead Israel into victories and her true place of inheritance in her Messiah. Pray that the Lord will indeed “*take possession of praise*” in the Holy Land (Zechariah 2:12) and that it will be released to His glory in Spirit and in Truth.

***Ezekiel 37:21-23.** *“Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will purify them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”*

PLEASE PRAY: that the Spirit who ‘convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment’ would be poured out on Israel in increasing measure, bringing her to a place where God can reveal the Purification which has been prepared for her—so that Israel may indeed dwell in his land of covenant forever (vs. 25).

***Ezekiel 37:21-22.** *“I will...bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again”* (Emphases ours).

It is plain that God still sees the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s seed forever as still being “their own land.” The “mountains of Israel” always refer to the area currently labelled the “West Bank” by much of the world, and slated to be split off to form “two nations side by side” each with it’s own leader. From these two verses, we see that such a “two –state” solution made up of two nations and with two different leaders is not nor will ever be God’s plan. Only He can bring divided Israel back and make them *one nation*. And it will be finally accomplished in this section of land (in which the promises in Shechem, Bethel and Hebron were made)—hence, the huge warfare already raging and which will continue as Israel comes into relation with her God, the final battle is won, and God’s Kingdom comes there (Ezekiel 38-39).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s kingdom come in the returning Children of Israel and in the Mountains of Israel—Judea, Jerusalem and Samaria. Pray for a renewed sense of stewardship of Jews in Israel regarding all which God says is “their own land”—and an

awareness of Who must be trusted to bring it to pass if it is never to be divided into two kingdoms again.

***Ezekiel 37:24-25.** *“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd...My servant David shall be their prince forever.”* Evangelical Christianity often sees this “David” as Yeshua/Jesus, the spiritual and physical descendant of the David anointed by Samuel. Yeshua will certainly reign (Psalm 2) from His throne in Jerusalem as King of Kings; as verse 28 here states, *“the nations also will know that I, YHVH, make Israel holy, when my holy place is in their midst forevermore.”* However, it is assumed in Hebrew tradition, and among many Messianic believers in the land that this passage refers indeed to a resurrected David, the “shepherd king” son of Jesse (It is of interest that the “Prince” who begins to be mentioned in Ezekiel 45:7 and who ministers in the midst of the mysterious Temple described there is designated with the same Hebrew word *nasi* as the word for “prince” here. David’s often stated desire had been that he might “dwell in the house of the YHVH forever.”).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s government come into place in this land. Both in the near and in the distant future, may *His Kingdom Come!*



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (8-14 December: *VaYechi*—“And He Lived”) will be: TORAH: Genesis 47:28—50:26; HAFTARAH: I Kings 2:1-12]

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