

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (December 21, 2010)



Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

1. MESSIAH IN ISRAEL

Secular Israelis are often fascinated by Christmas. Of course, they would never place a Christmas tree in their homes...but they are drawn to the celebrations by their Gentile friends. Each Christmas Eve at least two of the large old churches in the Old City of Jerusalem will be filled with curious Israelis who come to listen and perhaps join in with the Carol singing. Already the Classical Radio station has been playing Handel's *Messiah*. Now a choir of Christians and Messianic Jews will be repeating performances of *Messiah* during the coming week...once in English and twice in the new Hebrew translation. We have written before about this wonderful gift, which has come to Israel during the past three years...this great work of Faith about the Jewish Messiah, much of which is comprised of Hebrew Scriptures, at last in song in the Holy Land in the original language from which it was taken. Many Israelis will have never heard of Isaiah 53...and would suspect that it wasn't in their own Bibles if they were not told. Yet this wonderful chapter is at the heart of Handel's oratorio.

PLEASE PRAY:

***For many Israelis to attend the performances of *Messiah* on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Pray that the Holy Spirit will work these words of life borne on the wings of exalted music into their spirits in a light of revelation!**

***For all the finances to be met for the performances...and the Joy of the Lord to rest on the singers and musicians.**

***For Israelis in the holy land intrigued by the celebrations to be drawn to the Truth of the birth of their Messiah, rather than just the fantasy which has grown up about it. That they may come to know that the One born in Bet-Lecham (House of Bread—Bethlehem) was not just the “Gentile God” but truly the Son of David the Son of God the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the World!**

2. AN ATTACK ON BELIEVERS NEAR BEIT SHEMESH

“Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O LORD, and that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name. O, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! Do not forget the life of Your poor forever. Look to the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty. O, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name. Arise, O God, plead Your own cause!” (Psalm 74:18-22a)

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints” (Psalm 116:15).

This past Saturday two believing women, one a Messianic Israeli tour guide who has been in Israel since the early '90s, the other, an American friend currently making her home in England, were brutally attacked while on a hike not too far from Beit Shemesh. Both women were bound and stabbed repeatedly. Kristine Luken, the American, died of her wounds. The Israeli woman, Kay Wilson, wore a Star of David necklace, which one of the men carefully unfastened and took off her before thrusting his knife into her breast where it had lain. Presumed dead by her assailants, she was able to rise after they had left and stagger to a place where someone saw her and called for help. A police-imposed blackout continues regarding progress made in apprehending the murderers. They appear to have been Palestinian Arabs who had crossed the border from Judea. What has come out in news bulletins on this tragedy has been the faith of the two ladies...and their deep love for Israel and seeing God's purposes realized here.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That the Father of Mercies, God of all Comfort will comfort the loved ones of the sister who was killed and the one who survived the attack.**

***For Kay Wilson...that she would be healed from her wounds, and from the trauma suffered in the attack. That she would be protected from the Accuser. That God would comfort her and restore what has been torn and violated.**

***That the murders will be apprehended and justice be done.**

***That Believers in Israel, while not living in fear, would be sober-minded and alert...surrounding themselves and their loved ones prayers of protection.**

***That the Body in Israel would know what it means to overcome the Enemy with the Word of our Testimony and the Blood of the Lamb—loving not our own lives even unto death (Revelation 12:1; 2:10).**

***That God will turn what the Spirit of Darkness meant for evil into light and salvation here in the Land.**

3. NECESSARY TOOLS (IN HEBREW) FOR 'RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.'

NOTICE

Exactly one year ago this week (i.e. the week of the *Sh'mot* Torah Portion), we included in an Update the need reprinted below regarding the desperate need in Israel for a complete Hebrew Reference Bible. We were overjoyed a few months ago to learn that such a Bible was now in preparation. This week we received word from the Bible Society in Israel that it

has been completed, and copies should be available in stores in Jerusalem by the end of January!! We are reprinting the original prayer request because we believe the information in it to still be pertinent in our prayers—*that this wonderful tool to be birthed, that it be widely disseminated, that adequate funds be released to allow this, and that from this beginning it will grow and continue to be perfected by godly scholars for generations to come.* For more information about this, including information for how one might contribute financially we would refer you to the web-site www.biblesocietyinIsrael.com

A visit to the Religions section of most U.S. bookstore chains will reveal row upon row of English-language reference Bibles in a large variety of translations. By “reference” we mean Bibles containing notes in the margins linking words, thoughts, and ideas of one passage with related ones in other parts of the New and Old Testaments, as well as alternate translations or readings of specific words or expressions.

This wonderful accessory to Biblical studies, so taken for granted by those growing up with the Scriptures in English-speaking countries, is virtually unobtainable by the awakening Hebrew-speaking Messianic Body in Israel. Bear in mind—Hebrew as a spoken modern language is only something over 100 years old. Israel has only been a nation a little over 60 of those years—and for fewer than 40 years has there been a sizeable number of Israelis who have come into community as believers in Yeshua as Messiah and Savior. In 1976 a translation of the New Testament into Modern Hebrew was made, and in the early ‘90s, a very useful referenced edition was published by The Bible Society in Israel. This contains references from both the New and Old Testaments with notes. However, there are still no complete Hebrew Bibles for Israeli Believers with reference notes throughout the Tanach (Old Testament), relating to other passages both within that Testament and the New. In addition, the Tanach uses an antiquated form of Hebrew (rather like using King James English or even older, as compared to modern English). While it is not likely that a “modernized” O.T. text will become accepted for standard use, some marginal notes clarifying archaic expressions would be of enormous help to modern users, especially Jews with a secular background and little exposure to Biblical Hebrew.

When questioning those in a position to contribute to compilation and publication of a complete Hebrew reference Bible containing both Testaments, the primary response is that there simply aren’t funds available to cover such an undertaking. After all, it’s only market will be the fledgling Messianic Body within Israel. But that “Body” is awakening and growing—and as it grows, not to mention when it begins to explode, there is a strong and serious need that it possess at least the bare essentials of such tools as will aid it in growth and maturing in the Word.

PLEASE PRAY:

****That God would raise up competent believing Messianic Biblical scholars with the charge and resolve to produce a complete Hebrew reference study Bible for the awakening Jewish Body of Messiah in Israel.***

****That God would move on men and women of financial means around the world to contribute substantially for the raising up and completion of such a project.***

****For godly oversight of this venture in wisdom, integrity and the fear of the Lord***

**For love, unity, integrity, graciousness and humility in the Body, in the Nations as well as Israel, in releasing available resources and materials already compiled for the production of such a priceless tool for the building up of the congregation of Israel.*

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 *Sh'mot* ("Names"—of the Children of Israel who came to Egypt).

TORAH: Exodus 1:1—6:1

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 27:6—28:13; 29:22-23

***Exodus 2:2.** *"So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months."* The Hebrew word for "beautiful" and "hid" are the same as the words for "goodness" and "stored up" in Psalm 31:19 (NIV)—*"How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which You bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you."* Through the agency of a godly mother and then God-fearing midwives who had assisted her, this little "goodness" was hidden away—in fact, would be stored away for the next 80 years until being brought forth as leader on behalf of a mighty people who under his leadership would learn to fear and take refuge in their God. **PLEASE PRAY: For protection of those "goodnesses" of God which are presently hidden away for a time of future release to the Body of Messiah in Israel. Pray for grace to trust that God is storing up goodness on our behalf as we love, fear and trust Him. Pray for courage and Heavenly guidance for believing families in Israel in storing away their children as much as possible in godly home environments before they are released into the near-paganism of secular Israeli schools.**

***Exodus 2:3.** *"But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank."* "Ark" is the Hebrew word *teva*, a box (A different word *aron*, a closet, is used for the Ark of the Covenant). The same word *teva* is used for the ark which God commissioned Noah to build, in which he and all His household were saved. This second ark protected the future leader of a remnant-nation from which would come a deliverer for all people.

***Exodus 2:25, 3:7-8a...** *“And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them (Hebrew: “and God knew.”); “And the LORD said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their pain. So I have come down to deliver them...” (Emphasis ours). God still *knows* His people Israel, He *sees* oppression against them and *hears* the cry of their hearts—His knowledge of them includes a fellowship in their pain. He, who *came down* to deliver them from Egypt and to lead them “*up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey*” (vs 8), would one day *come down* again to deliver them—and all of Humankind—from their sin. He still *knows* and watches over them—and shall *come down* on their behalf again (Zechariah 8:3, 12:8, 14:4). By that day all of Israel shall at last *know* Him! “*No more shall every man teach his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more*” (Jeremiah 31:34).*

***Exodus 3:5.** *“Then He said, ‘Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’”* The other place in Scripture where we find this expression “holy ground/-earth/-land” (Hebrew: *adamat hakodesh*) is 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.”* PLEASE PRAY: *for an awakened sense of the “Holy” in Israel—that we will abstain from “drawing near” carelessly and in the flesh—that we will be sensitive to the sanctity of the very EARTH where holy activity has taken place in the past, and which the Lord is repossessing for His glory today!*

***Exodus 3:16b; 4:31(NKJV).** *“...I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt.”...“So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.”* Today the Hebrew verb *liphkod* usually means “to command”. However, in Biblical times, it could mean “to attend to/to care for” and often “to visit.” Thus, in Genesis 50:24,25 (NKJV), Joseph promises that God “will surely visit” his brothers’ descendants in Egypt and bring them out of that land. Here, in Egypt 400 years later, we are told that the time of that “sure visitation” has come. In Psalm 8:4 (NKJV) David expresses awe at the amazing privilege of God visiting us, “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” This visitation is life, salvation and blessing for those who love Him and are waiting for it. Job voiced this, even in the midst of painful affliction, “You have granted me life and favor, and Your visitation has guarded my spirit” (Job 10:12). Yet God’s visitation does not come as a joy to those who are in rebellion against Him. In fact, in Isaiah 10:3 and many places in Jeremiah (8:12, 10:15, 11:23, etc.) this same word “visitation” is in the NKJV translated day of “punishment.” Luke 19:44 shows Yeshua weeping over Jerusalem. God had sent “all the things which were needed for her peace”—but they were “hidden from her eyes.” Consequently, warfare and destruction were coming “because she did not know the time of her visitation.” PLEASE PRAY: *For a powerful visitation of God in Jerusalem and throughout Israel. Pray for the Body of Messiah here to prepare and long for that visitation. The Apostle Peter left us important instructions regarding this day: “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among*

the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (I Peter 2:12).

***Exodus 4:2; 19b.** *“So the LORD said to him (Moses), ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A rod.’...“And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.”* God begins with us where we are and with what we have. When Moses in obedience yielded to God what he had, the simple rod became transformed into *“The Rod of God”!*

***Exodus 3:14, 15.** *“And God said to Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM...Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “YHVH, God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.””* English translations which read “The LORD God...” can be misleading. “LORD” is a *title of respect*, not a name. The point was that this God had a NAME, one by which He had been known to their fathers 400 years before. That name was YHVH (Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh in the Hebrew). It was a personal name given to His people. It would become one of their most precious possessions, and countless psalms spoke of its beauty. But because of Israel’s sin, sometime after the Glory of God’s presence departed from the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 10:1-11:23), the correct pronunciation of the beloved Name was also lost. Today it is normally not attempted to be spoken in Israel; Adonai (a Hebrew name related to the word for “master”) is used in its place, or the words *Ha Shem*—“the Name” (Words such as Yeho’vah, Jehovah, or Yaweh, sometimes utilized in the West, are at best educated guesses). In Matthew 23:39, Yeshua applied Psalm 118:26 to Himself, telling Jerusalem that she would not see Him again until she said, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of YHVH.” Yet the One who will come again in that Name, actually bore it within His own! The name *Yeshua* (Jesus) is a contracted form of the names YHVH and the Hebrew word for “salvation”—“*And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Yeshua—for He will save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21).

PLEASE PRAY: *For a spirit of grace and supplication to be poured out on the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—grace to look on the One who was pierced (Zech 12:10—14), and to realize that His holy name YESHUA bears within it the Name and Salvation of the God of their Fathers—that “All who call on the Name of the LORD shall be saved!”*



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 26 December 2010—1 January 2010
Va’era (“And I appeared”—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai), TORAH:
Exodus 6:2—9:35 ; HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 28:25—29:21.]