

ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

Glory of Zion International Ministries



A narrow gorge near SdeBoker in the Negev south of Beer Sheva

On Tuesday, Israel enters the 2nd week *Bein haMetzarim*—“Between the Straits.”

1. TWO HOLY SITES; TWO ANCIENT PURCHASES; TWO CENTERS OF CONFLICT.

‘Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Messiah... “But as for Me, I have installed my King upon Zion, My holy mountain.” (Psalm 2:1-2, 6).

Last May 24th marked 50 years (Hebrew calendar) since the Temple Mount (with all of the Old City of Jerusalem) came under Israeli sovereignty for the first time in over 2,600 years. Less publicized was another “50th Anniversary” which took place the following morning, that of the morning in 1967 when Israeli troops arrived at Hebron, to find it festooned with white flags of surrender. For the first time in 2,600 years the *Cave of the Patriarchs* was also back in Israeli hands. We say “back in”, because the history, indeed, the very identity of the Hebrew people is inwebbed in the fabric of what took place with their ancestors at these two locations. This history extends back to Israel’s great father, Abraham—to her greatest king, David. Remarkably, record of her legal entitlement to these places also extends back to both of these men.

HEBRON

ABRAHAM. *It was in Hebron that the LORD appeared again to Abraham* (Genesis 18), fellowshiped with him over a meal (6-8), promised to him and his wife Sara a son (10), confided

with him as with a friend (17-33), disclosing that this intimacy (knowledge) would extend through his generations, until all that was promised to him was fulfilled. Even the name Hebron (Hebrew: Hevron) is related to the Hebrew word for “friendship”. or a “close connection.” ***And it was in Hebron that Abraham purchased for 400 shekels of silver a cave and a field in which to bury his wife Sarah (Genesis 23)***—a place where he, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob with their wives Rebekah and Leah would also be buried.

DAVID. *Some 900 years later, it was to Hebron that the LORD sent David to be anointed King over Israel* (II Samuel 2:1-4). The seat of his kingdom would remain there for seven years before he took Zion and removed up to Jerusalem (5:1-7).

MORIA—THE “TEMPLE MOUNT”

ABRAHAM. *It was to this mountain that the LORD sent Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice (Genesis 22).* And it was on this mountain where “God saw and provided the Lamb.” It was here that He reasserted His covenant (vs 17-18), this time declaring that in Abraham’s seed all the *nations* of the earth would find blessing (In Gen. 12:3 that blessing had extended to families)—and adding, “—*your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.*”

DAVID. *And it was atop this mountain that King David 900 years later would purchase the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite for 50 shekels of silver* and built an altar to the LORD—and where, following his death, his son Solomon would lay the foundation of the house of God (II Samuel 24:24-25; II Chronicles 3:1-3).

“The Gates of their Enemies”

There has been and continues to be a spiritual war over these two places which played such vital roles in the founding history of Israel, roles which, at least in one case, have yet to reach their ultimate fulfillment.

God longs for His people, now returned to their ancient land, to return also into a relationship with their God like that of their father Abraham, who rejoiced when He appeared to him in Hebron in the form of a man, ran to meet Him, and called him *Adonai*—“Divine Master” (Genesis 18:3; John 8:56). He longs for Israel to recognize the “Son” whom David mentioned prophetically in Psalm 2, the One who will reign over the world from His throne on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Hebron and the Temple Mount are “gates” of recognition, of revelation and glory. But, as occurred in ancient times, both are presently gates in which the Enemy has a strong foothold, and over which there rage fierce battles. One way is by the spreading of falsehoods. For years now, the Palestinian Authority has sought to spread the lie among its people (and the world) that there has never been a Temple or even a Hebrew presence on the Temple Mount. And for Hebron, well---since there is no denying a presence of Abraham, even in its own faith, Islam has simply invented a story that Abraham (or Ibrahim) was the “first Muslim”—one whose covenant promise came through Ishmael—so naturally, Jews, descended from Isaac have no claim to the place where he is buried.

DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS, EVIDENCE OF THIS SPIRITUAL CONFLICT HAS MANIFEST IN BOTH PLACES

I. Hebron.

On July 7th, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Hebron, *including the Cave of the Patriarchs*, as a World Heritage Site of the “State of Palestine.” No mention of any Jewish or Hebrew connection to the site. (This is the first time ever that the UNESCO committee has recognized a significant Jewish religious site as part of the (non-existent) Muslim “state.”) Calling the ruling “delusional”, Prime Minister Netanyahu, in rejecting the designation, read before his Cabinet the following Sunday verses 16-19 from chapter 23 of Genesis, and declared, *“The connection between the Jewish People and Hebron and the Tomb of the Patriarchs is one of purchase and of history which may be without parallel in the history of peoples.”* Of course, some news media were quick to point out that *“Attempts to make legal or diplomatic cases based on Biblical accounts are most often ridiculed or not taken seriously.”* But this does not change the way the Court of Heaven views the current transactions! Israel currently oversees the Cave, ensuring that both Muslims and Jews are allowed freely to worship there. The Palestinians had railroaded the request (which should have taken months) through, citing a clause that exceptions could be made “if the cite were in danger”. The “danger” was Israel’s “occupation.” It was heartening to see US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley call the vote on Hebron “tragic on several levels” and “an affront to history”.

II. Temple Mount.

Early this past Friday morning, three armed Israeli Arabs came leaping down a passageway from the Temple Mount. At a junction where Israeli Border Patrol policemen were standing, they opened fire from behind, mortally wounding two and injuring a third before retreating from Israeli fire back onto the Mount, running to hide in one of the mosques. In the ensuing fire-fight, the three assailants were killed. The two slain policemen were Druze Israelis, Kamil Shnaan (22) and Ha’il Satawi (30). Their funerals came before sundown; Jewish Israel mourned. A heart-rending picture in all Israeli media showed Satawi’s newborn son, born three weeks ago, being nuzzled by his father.

Israel responded by taking the highly unusual step of closing the Temple Mount to all visitors—on a Friday, the Islamic holy day when thousands, if not tens of thousands, of Muslims ascend the mountain for prayers. It remained closed until Sunday morning while Israel searched the Mountain for weapons (it is still not clear how the assailants got their weapons up there); new metal detectors and other security measures are being placed at all entryways.. The “interference with Muslim worship” caused an immediate storm of condemnation from Islamic nations. But as of this writing, the repercussions do not appear to have gone beyond that.

Why did they do it? For analyst, Avi Issacharoff of *The Times of Israel*,

They selected the most resonant site, on the most resonant day of the week: The Temple Mount complex, on the day of Friday prayers...They knew that a shooting attack at the most incendiary spot in the Middle East would be likely to prompt a major escalation...would gain massive media coverage...an attack, at the incendiary Temple Mount, intended to set the Middle East ablaze.

(Emphases ours) 1)

“The most resonant site”... “the most incendiary spot in the Middle East”...the place where an attack might be “intended to set the Middle East ablaze.” This is the Temple Mount. It is indeed an incendiary place. During the past three years, there have occurred a number of events calculated to ignite that blaze. The Enemy is aware of the LORD’s promise in Isaiah 25:7-8 that *“on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nation. He will swallow up death for all time...”* He will do what he can to keep that delusive “covering” in place—to keep light and revelation of the true King to Israel and the billions of Muslims in the world from coming forth. Someday a great conflict will break out; and, as has been truly said, the “Last Battle” will be over who will be worshipped on this Mountain!

But these “greater battles” must come in the timing of the LORD. To this point, a Word from a prophetic voice in the city which has been repeated and continues to resonate with us, consists of two words, *“Not Now!”* God is presently allowing shakings to occur on the Temple Mount, a time of “winnowing” when much will fall to the ground. But the plans and devices of the Enemy for unleashing a great explosion of violence at this time must not be allowed to succeed. We believe that the prayers of the Saints are a means to that end!

PLEASE PRAY:

*** The mercies and redemptive holy purposes of God be released over Hebron and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. That occurrences in these two holy places be governed by the times and seasons of the Most High.**

*** That the devices of the Evil One to put off or divert the Holy purposes of God in these places by a release of violence which would result in upheaval throughout the Middle East, that these devices would be bound from being released in the name of Yeshua/Jesus. Declare, “NOT NOW!”**

*** That a longing awaken within the Jews who have returned to the Land, a longing after the God who showed Himself a Friend to Abraham in Hebron, and Who established David’s throne and authority there; Who filled the Temple on Mount Moriah with His presence; Who will return there to reign, where He “on His holy mountain” He will be ministered to by “all the house of Israel, all of them in the Land” (Ezekiel 20:40).**

*** Less than 20 years ago, Israel was under a liberal government which, under pressure from the nations, seriously examined the possibility of releasing Israeli sovereignty over both of these sites. Pray that Israel will come to consider as holy these two places integral to her very heritage, which the God of Heaven 50 years ago intrusted back into her hands. Pray that *Elohei-Yisrael*—“The God of Israel” will guide His people into seeking His counsel in how wisely to administer that charge.**

*** Pray for the families of the two police officers who were slain at their posts, guarding the Holy Mountain this past weekend. That the “Father of mercies and God of all comfort” would visit and comfort them and direct them into a way of life and hope. Pray for the tiny 3-week-**

old son of one of the victims...that he will grow up under the protection and grace of the LORD, that he may come someday to say, “*Look, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us; This is the LORD for whom we have waited.*” (Isaiah 25:9).

1) “Temple Mount killers aimed to set the Middle East ablaze”: *The Times of Israel*, 14 July 2017/4:01 pm

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. The Haftarah, unless otherwise noted, will be that read in Ashkenazy synagogues around the world. The references for all texts are those found in English translations of the Scriptures.

The *Parashah* for this week 16-22 July 2017 is a “Double Reading”:

I. Matot—“Tribes”

TORAH: Numbers 30:1—32:42

Numbers 30. Vows and oaths to the LORD are extremely serious transactions in God’s eyes; such words, coming out of the mouth of a person and binding his or her very soul, must be taken seriously and honored by all humankind who are made in God’s own image (vss. 2, 6). In Ancient Israel, vows and oaths were binding absolutely on all males (30:2). Yet within the authority structure God had set up, there were certain circumstances in which the positioning of a human father or husband could (as with the divine Father/Husband of which they are a reflection) allow release of a special grace to cover the guilt of a young daughter living at home, or of a wife (the protection and oversight of both for which God held the father or husband ultimately responsible). Thus, if a father, on the day he heard of a vow his daughter had made deemed it unwise, he could overrule her vow and the LORD would forgive her (30:5). Similarly, on the day a husband became aware of a vow made by his wife, he might, if he believed it unwise, choose to “overrule” (Hebrew verb: *lehani*) and “make void” (Hebrew verb: *lehaphir*) the vow which she had made – “*and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound her soul, and the LORD will forgive her.*”

[It is interesting that both of these Hebrew verbs are used in Psalm 33:10, “*The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing* (Hebrew: *lehaphir*); *He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect*” (Hebrew: *lehani*). Here also, faulty counsel is cancelled out by a greater authority in an ultimate mercy.]

***Numbers 30:15.** *“But if he does make them void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity”.* In a holy sanctuary built and maintained by fallen man, those of the House of Levi were called to *“bear the iniquity”* of that sanctuary. (Numbers 18:1, 23), while Aaron and his descendants would *“bear the iniquity”* of his priesthood. There was a special grace given to those in these positions—but if the rest of the Israelites came near to the tabernacle of meeting, they would *“bear their sin and die.”* Likewise, it appears here that a measure of this same grace was given to a man in his role as “priest” or “Levite” over his home. Ultimately, just as one goat was slain for sin on the Day of Atonement, but another was necessary to be taken into the wilderness to *“bear on itself all their iniquities...”*(Leviticus 16:22), so would come Another who not only would offer Himself up to die as a sacrifice for sin—but as *the Lamb of God, also would bear away the sin of the world* (John 1:29).

***Numbers 31:1-2.** *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.’”*

It is important in reading the grim even shocking events of the first half of this chapter, to realize *Who* had issued the order. In Psalm 94:1 the LORD (YHVH) is twice called *El-Nekamot*—literally, *“God of all Vengeance”*. Isaiah 61:2 speaks of the Spirit’s anointing One to proclaim *“the day of the vengeance of our God”* (as well as to *“comfort all who mourn”*). II Thessalonians 1:8 prophecies a Day when **Yeshua** will be revealed from Heaven with mighty angels *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah.”* Romans 12:17-20 cautions against believers taking their own revenge for perceived offenses, and quotes Deuteronomy 32:35, *“‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the YHVH”*. Hebrews 10:30 also quotes this same verse from the Torah as relevant to those who “know Him” today. Vengeance is always *His* and not ours. Yet Psalm 149:7 makes clear that “Saints” will on occasion be used to *“execute [His] vengeance on the nations.”*

It is obviously this, the righteous vengeance of God, which is being released through His people in Numbers 31. “It is appointed for [all] men to die once...” (Hebrews 9:27). The time was at hand for these Midianites, including the women who had *“caused the children of Israel* (even as they were poised to cross into the Promised Land) *to trespass against the LORD”* (Numbers 31:1).

II. Massei—“Journeys of...”

TORAH: Numbers 33:1—36:13

CHAPTER 33

“Now at the end of the long chain of Wilderness stories that began in Exodus, as the Israelites are poised to cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, we get a grand recapitulation of the whole narrative in the form of an itinerary of all the “way stations” in the Wilderness march” (Alter, Robert: *The Five Books of Moses*, W.W.Norton & Co: New York, London, 2004 (p. 852, n 1).

***Numbers 33:1.** *“These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.* (Emphases ours)

As noted when this ‘going forth’ from Egypt was first recorded (Exodus 12:41, 51; 13:18), although the Children of Israel may not yet have been fully aware that they were an “army” (with each member assigned his/her positioning in its arraying), *YHVH Tz’vaot, Elohei Ma’arkhot Yisrael* (“Yehovah of Armies, God of the Arraying of Israel”—I Samuel 17:45) was well aware! *When people are brought out of the slave-house of sin into the Kingdom of Heaven, they will soon discover that they are in a war—but also that they each have a place especially reserved in the army of the Captain of the Hosts of the LORD!*

***Numbers 33:2.** *“And Moses wrote down their departure points for their journeying by the word of the LORD, and these are their journeying by their departure points”* (Robert Alter, trans).

“Departure points” (Hebrew: *motz’a*) is also sometimes translated into English as “starting points” or “places of origin”. All have validity, albeit resulting in slightly different perspectives. In fact, this word is related to that used of God in the traditional Hebrew blessing over meals, *Ha’motzi lechem min haAretz*—“Who brings forth bread from the earth”. So the passage might even be interpreted to read, *“Moses wrote down those places from which they were brought forth for their journey”*. An old Jewish proverb goes something like this, *“You can’t know where you’re going ‘til you know where you came from.”* It was important that the Hebrews keep a record of these starting/departure points from which, in the timings of the LORD, they had been continually drawn forth—back into the path of their journeying (Numbers 9:18).

***Numbers 36:7.** *“And an estate of the Israelites shall not turn round from tribe to tribe, but the Israelites shall cling each man to the estate of his fathers”* (Robert Alter, trans.).

“Cling” comes from the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 2:24 regarding a man and his wife. It was this charge as related to inherited land which likely fueled Naboth’s response to Ahab in I Kings 21:3, *“YHVH Forbid! That I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!”*

It is important to pray for Israelis returning to the Land of their Fathers—that they will receive from the Lord a fierce, strong zeal after that land, a holy jealousy in valuing this inheritance passed down from the Fathers, who received it as an eternal *Covenant* from the God who chose them and met with them there!

***After Numbers 36:13:**

***KhaZAK! KhaZAK! V’Nit’khaZEK!*—“Be Strong! Be Strong! And we Shall Become Stronger!!**

It is traditional to chant this admonishment after reaching the end of each of the Five Books of Moses.

HAFTARAH (“Haftarah of Affliction/Admonition 2): Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

During the three-week period “between the straits” (the 17th of Tammuz through the 9th of Av)

the usual *Haftarah* portions are replaced by special “Haftarah’s of Affliction/Admonition”), calling Israel to sober contemplation of her sin and her deserving of severe judgment—and of the Love of her God still drawing her to repent and return to Him.

***Jeremiah 2:13.** *“For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the Source of living water, and they have hewed themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.”*

***Jeremiah 3:4**[Read in Ashkenazy Synagogues]: *“Will you not from this time cry to Me, ‘My Father, You are the guide of my youth?’”*

***Jeremiah 4:1-2** [Read in Sephardic Jewish Synagogues]: *“‘If you will return, O Israel,’ declares the LORD, ‘then you should return to me. And if you will put away your detested things from My presence, and will not waver, and you will swear ‘As the LORD lives’ in truth, in justice and in righteousness; then the nations will bless themselves in Him, and in Him they will glory.”*

It has always been the divine plan that as Israel comes into a right relationship with her God repercussions will be felt throughout the world—the nations will come into a new revelation of His Glory, and *“bless themselves in Him!”*



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Parashah for next week 23-29 July 2017 is called *Dvarim*—“Words...”. TORAH: Deuteronomy 1:1—3:22; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 8:13—9:23.]

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