

Prayer Update From Israel (September 20, 2016)



Sunrise over Bethany and the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of YHVH is risen upon you...the nations shall come to your light, and kings to the radiance of your dawning!”

(Isaiah 60: 1,3; See this week’s Haftarah below.)

1. EID al-ADHA.

Last Monday marked the holiest holiday in the Muslim calendar, Eid al-Adha—the “Feast of the Sacrifice.” On this day, Muslims around the world celebrate the Sacrifice of Abraham’s son, Ishmael. We wrote of this during the closing days of Ramadan, how their religion teaches that Abraham (Ibrahim) was commanded by Allah to go with his wife Hagar and son Ishmael to a place near Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. There (and there are several somewhat differing accounts of the particulars) Allah tested Abraham, commanding him to offer Ishmael as a sacrifice. When he hesitated, Ishmael his son encouraged him to obey Allah rather than his emotions. Then Abraham collected himself, took his knife and cut his sons throat; Ishmael fell to the ground. But when he looked down, a miracle had occurred; Abraham saw a ram with its throat cut on the ground, and Ishmael lying there safe! As a reward for Abraham’s obedience and Ishmael’s faithfulness, Allah gave Abraham another son, Isaac.

One of the cardinal troubles with the religious system which teaches this, is that it places God’s covenant of life for all Humankind in the wrong physical line. In Genesis 17: 18-21, Elohim states unequivocally that His covenant must and shall go through Isaac, not Ishmael. One of the revealed names for God is *Elohim Haim*--the “Life-God.” His covenants will all be covenants of life. From which we may infer, that any covenant opposed to His life-covenants must be a covenant of *death*.

This is the tragedy for people under the bondage of this religious system—the evil spiritual power behind it hates God’s covenants and wishes, as did the serpent in the Garden, to lead those

made in His image into a place of death. In Scripture, such a covenant-hating spirit is linked with the name *Amalek*—a power which God hates and is at war with until its very memory is erased from the earth (Exodus 17:14-16; Numbers 24:20).

On *Eid al-Adha*, live animals are sacrificed in commemoration. But there is no Life in the sacrifices. Last week, shocking pictures immersed of the streets of down-town Dhaka, Bangladesh—flooded with red streams from the blood of thousands of animals mixed with the torrential rains. The holiday marks the end of the annual *Haj* to Mecca. But rather than being a festival of peace, it served this year as a platform for sectarian strife between Sunni and Shi'ite — between the nations of Saudi Arabia and Iran. Iran's supreme leader blamed the Saudi royal family for “murdering” more than 2000 pilgrims (some 400 of whom were Iranian) at a stampede in Mecca last year. Saudi media accused Iran of attempting to set up an alternative *haj*, directing its pilgrims to Shi'ite places holy to that stream in southern Iraq. The rumblings between these two Islamic super-powers is growing ominous.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** For mercy on those within the Islamic faith who are truly seeking a knowledge of the Holy. Pray for supernatural encounters, dreams, visions.**

*** For revelation among the Muslim people that they are following a religious system which has at its center adherence to a covenant of death. For revelation regarding the covenants through Abraham, Isaac and Israel—which are covenants of life for all humankind!**

*** An awakening of understanding in believers around the world that we are at war with powerful spiritual forces which hate God's covenants of life—especially as realized in the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). But we are not alone in the fight. As a believer, my Banner (*Nissi*) is the fact that God Himself is fighting on behalf of His covenants.**

*** As we are nearing the Hebrew High Holy days (*Yom Kippur*, the “Day of Atonement” is three weeks from Wednesday)—pray for an understanding among Jews and Muslims that the only atonement comes, not through the blood of bulls and goats, but through the blood of the Lamb of God, which is clean and filled with Life!**

2. THE VOICE OF ONE CALLING...AND ISRAELI YOUTH ARE RESPONDING TO THE CALL!

We continue to be grateful for what the Lord poured last month in the Elav 2016 conference, for which so many of you prayed. Only this morning Norma received a call from a young Orthodox Jewish man, informing her that she had come to know Yeshua as his Messiah and Savior during *Elav*! Such a call must, unfortunately, usually be treated with a measure of caution--ultra-Orthodox “anti-Missionaries” will often have someone call in an attempt to draw out information from a Messianic ministry. But this person wasn't seeking information at all—he simply wanted to let us know of his decision to follow Messiah, and request that those at Succat Hallel keep him in their prayers! *Hallelu-Yah!*

Also, this morning, we received the most recent Dor HaBa (“Coming” or “Rising Generation”) *prayer letter*. It contains a report on the New C.D. made in the Ben Hinnom Valley, as well as Bethany Ridings sharing her experience of the first evening of the conference. With her permission, we are copying that portion of her report here!

The Voice of One Calling CD

Adam and I and our dear sound engineer, Clay Collins, worked long hours this summer. This was so we could finish the Hebrew and Arabic worship album, The Voice of One Calling (Volume 1).

By God’s grace, we were able to release the album in time for the *Elav* conference. We had a lot of support from our kids, our parents and the Succat Hallel community.

After *Elav*, one of the youth leaders from Nazareth called with excitement to tell me how much she loves the cd. She said that it brings a fresh, anointed sound of worship that she has never heard before.

The album is now available here in Israel. It will soon be available online through iTunes... etc. We will keep you posted! In the meantime, you can visit: <http://voiceofonecalling.com>

I had the privilege and joy of leading worship at the *Elav* Conference. We had a mixed Arab and Jewish team of 8 people. And we led worship twice at the conference, opening and closing the first evening. We went back and forth between Hebrew and Arabic throughout the worship songs.

There were a few precious, memorable moments. One was when we sang the chorus of How Great is Our God in Hebrew and in Arabic and then in a cannon. All the instruments stopped. You could hear this large group of fervent voices singing about God's greatness!

There was such unity and excitement in worshipping God together in both languages. I know it was a blow to the enemy who wants nothing more but to bring chaos and disunity. And who wants to keep the Jews and the Arabs from walking in their full calling of Isaiah 19 worship.

Another special moment was at the end of the evening. We sang a song about Yeshua’s return and the peace He will bring to our region and to the whole earth.

The whole place broke out in joyful dancing. Jewish and Arab believers were singing with their arms over each other’s shoulders. They were clapping and saying, "Come, Yeshua, come!" in both languages. It felt as though we could have kept on worshipping for hours!

PLEASE PRAY:

** Over the continued work of the Holy Spirit, fanning into flame what was ignited in young Jewish and Arab hearts during Elav, Katzir, and other camps and conferences for Israeli youth this past summer.* That summer is now behind, and the young are back in their

schools. But Truth gained entrance into their spirits then, that it might be realized NOW, as the divine life of God invigorating their every-day experience!

* A good English translation of Isaiah 40:3 (from which the new C.D. gets its name) goes something like this, “*A voice of one calling, ‘Clear the way for the LORD in the desert, Make straight in the arava a highway for our God.’*” ***Pray for the young workers Our Lord has placed in the Israeli and Palestinian schools—that they will continually hear His voice—guiding them in clearing paths of Life in what are often spiritually desolate regions of the Israeli education system!***

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 18-24 September 2016 is called *Ki Tavo*- “When You Come Into...”

TORAH: Deuteronomy 26:1—29:9

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 60:1-22

TORAH

***Deuteronomy 26:1-11. Principal of “First Fruits”** “*And it shall be, when you come into the land which YHVH your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the soil, which you shall bring from your land that YHVH your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where YHVH your God chooses to make His name abide... ‘I declare today to YHVH your God that I have come to the country which YHVH swore to our fathers to give us...and now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the soil which you, O YHVH have given to me.’ Then you shall set it before YHVH your God, and worship before YHVH your God. So you shall rejoice in every good thing which YHVH your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.*”

***Deuteronomy 26:12-15.** *“When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase...and have given it to the Levite, the wayfarer in you land, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled... ‘I have obeyed the voice of YHVH my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded. Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the Land which You have given us....”*

For Israelis, part of the “holy tithe” of their fruitfulness was to be yielded up as provision for those who were ministering full-time to God on their behalf, the Levites. But not all—part of the tithe was to assist those whom God would send to live alongside His designated stewards of the land (Israel); as it were, a kind of offering of hospitality. And also, a portion was to go to those in their midst who had no means of supporting themselves, the fatherless and widows (James 1:27 in the New Covenant makes clear that this last continues to please the Father today). As Israelis were faithful and obedient to graciously see to the needs of all within the areas they had been entrusted to inhabit, they could then call upon YHVH their God to notice from His “*holy habitation in heaven*” (26:15), and to release His heavenly blessing over the people and the land.

Deuteronomy 27-28

In these chapters Israel is given further instructions to those of Deuteronomy 11:29-32. Upon entering the land, she must travel to the two mountains outside Shechem (Modern-day *Nablus*). This was near to the place where God appeared to and spoke with Abram when first he entered Canaan (Genesis 12:7). Israel must now return there and verbalize what actions will bring Israel blessing in the Land—and those which will result in curses. Curses for specific sins are listed in 27:14-26. Then come the promises of blessings for obedience to God’s commandments in 28:1-15. The curses for disobedience begin in 28:15 and continue through verse 68. This is one of the most terrifying passages in the Bible; by choosing to be outside of God’s protection, one opens one’s self to horrors—***“Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies...”*** (vs 47).

Tragically, much of the history of Israel may be traced in her choosing to walk out from beneath the “joy and gladness and abundance” offered her (eventually turning down the epitome and very source of these Blessings in the rejection of her Messiah), and wandering for centuries in the nations. Yet, even as she labored under that curse, there is an “everlasting love” which has “kept watch” through her long centuries of wanderings, continuing ever to “*draw her in loving kindness*” (Jer. 31:3). We believe there are many signs that those years are drawing to an end. **This week’s *Haftarah* from Isaiah 60 portends her awakening, an awakening which heralds light and hope to the gentile nations as well!**

***Deuteronomy 27:15-26.** *“And all the people shall answer and say, ‘AMEN!’”*

Twelve times the people are called to say this word. Its meaning is much deeper than a mere ‘period’ at the end of a prayer! In Hebrew, *amen* is made up of three letters which also form the root for the words *faith*, *faithfulness*, *belief*, and *to believe*. To say “Amen!” means, ***“I have faith in this”; “I believe this to be true”*** (*Emet*, the word for “truth” is itself etymologically related

to this root). Believing God's pronouncements regarding the sins listed in these verses, and affirming them to be true would bring life to those who obediently spoke them out. *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Romans 10:10).

HAFTARAH

***Isaiah 60:14.** *"Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; And they shall call you The City of YHVH, Zion of the Holy One of Israel"* (Emphases ours).

It is significant that the most virulent of Israel's present enemies refuse to utilize the name "Israel," a name given by God to Jacob (the offspring of Abraham's covenant-son Isaac) and his descendants. Rather than *Israel*, they choose to utilize in a derisive way the name *Zion* ("the Zionist entity"). Neither will the deity they serve allow them to call on the name of the LORD (YHVH, *Yehovah*). This passage reveals that one day they will have discerned the light of Truth—and bow to the Holy One over all the earth, who chose to eternally associate himself with the three names they despised—*Yehovah*, *Zion* and *Israel*.

***Isaiah 60:18-20.** *"Violence (Hebrew: *hamas*) shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls *Yeshu'ah* (Salvation) and your gates *Tehi'lah* (Praise). *The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.*"*

"For I,' says the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst'" (Zechariah 2:5).

***Isaiah 60:21.** *"Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified."*

It is righteousness that exalts a nation. The final securing of Israel's inheritance back in the Land is their coming into that righteousness.

"He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor 5:21).



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (25 September—1 October 2016) are called *Nitsavim*—“You are Stationed...” TORAH: Deuteronomy 29:10—30:20; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 61:10—63:9.

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