

Prayer Update From Israel (September 5, 2016)



Dawning over Bethlehem

Early this past Friday September 2nd, Norma, looking through the trees of Ramat Rachel in southern Jerusalem, found her attention arrested by the beauty of the morning light illuminating the ancient city of Bethlehem.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD (YHVH), his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace” (Micah 5:2-5a ESV).

1. THE “HOLINESS” OF MEKUDESHET IS NOT THAT WHICH GOD HAS APPOINTED FOR HIS HOLY CITY, NOR ANY “NEW REALITY” WHICH DOES NOT COME THROUGH HIS SON.

Yesterday was the beginning of a three-week experimental arts and faith festival in Jerusalem called *Mekudeshet*. Presented by The Jerusalem Season of Culture (JSOC), the annual event features dozens of artists, actors, musicians, media figures and others from around the world, its avowed purpose being “to harness the Holy City’s timeless energy to inspire artists and other participants to transcend cultural and spiritual borders and unite in these troubling times. (“Mekudeshet 2016 to Highlight Identity and Sanctity Through Art”: *Jewish Link of New Jersey*, Sept. 1, 2016).

Mekudeshet means holy, hallowed, sanctified. According to Itay Mautner, Artistic Director of the festival,

The power of Mekudeshet flows from the ancient depths of Jerusalem and returns back into the source. With the help of a collective sound and different languages, we will try to prove that Jerusalem is, and not just fleetingly, the home of a unified voice that is calling for tolerance, inclusivity and collaboration. We will see if it is possible, despite all the corporeal difficulties and earthly obstacles, to create a new Jerusalem reality. (Ibid.)

This year the festival is, for the first time, hosting what is being called “Amen—A House of Prayer for All Believers.” The house will host series of discussions, with options to pray three different times per day in Arabic, Hebrew and Coptic. According to the Mautner, *“It is nothing short of a miracle that between four walls, we will inaugurate a temporary home for the three religions [i.e. Jewish, Christian, Islam] that share Jerusalem and for those who wish to dwell under the wings of the Almighty”* (“A House for All Believers” to Open in Jerusalem”: *Breaking Israel News*, 14 August 2016.).

We will not here go into minute details about the festival. (There are ample primary sources regarding it on the internet.) What seems plain to us is that this year it is taking a more pronounced “religious” slant—a slant going far beyond the stated attempts to promote tolerance and unity between the three so-called “Abrahamic” religions.

We find it interesting that the new event, the “AMEN House of Prayer for All Believers” is taking place in the *Alpert Youth Music Center* located on the floor of the Ben Hinnom valley. This is the same building in which young Arab and Jewish believers in Yasua/Yeshua recorded a wonderful CD earlier this year, a testimony of praise in both Hebrew and Arabic! The valley within which it stands used to be cursed, but Jeremiah 31:40 promises it will one day be *Kodesh L’YHVH*—“Holy to the LORD.” We believe that this prophecy is already awakening!! (For one thing, for over ten years there has been continual worship and praise going on in a House of Prayer over the valley.)

In Isaiah 56:7, referring to the near-by Temple Mount, the LORD said, *“My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”*—a promise reiterated with zeal by Yeshua in Mark 11:17. But it was not to be a house of prayer for all believers—in whatever they wished to believe. It was this same Yeshua who said, ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”*** (John 14:6).

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That Israelis will not be led astray by *Mekudeshet* into a false “holiness”—into religious confusion—into a false “good news” which compromises the Truth.**

*** Over Jerusalem (From last week’s *Haftarah*), that *“No weapon formed against you shall prosper!”* (Isaiah 54:17)...that no sorcery or witchcraft guising as truth will be able to prosper and take hold of Jacob through this festival (Numbers 23:23).**

*** That those Israelis truly seeking light, will be granted grace to lead them to the Light of the World, but that false religious lights would be exposed.**

*** That angels would guard the Holiness which God is establishing in the Ben Hinnom Valley—that attempts by the enemy there to raise up a house of prayer for all religions would not prosper!**

*** For spiritual discernment, love, and the power of the spirit on all who God has called to stand on the walls of Jerusalem—both those in the House of Prayer presently established above the Hinnom Valley, and those standing with us throughout the world!!**

2. THE STRENGTHENING OF NETWORKS WITH AFRICA.

In our August 15 Update we wrote regarding the networking and strengthening of ties which is beginning to advance between Israel and nations on the continent of Africa phrase during his visit to Kenya in July. Of course, the enemy is against any strategic networking, physical or spiritual, between Israel and the countries of Africa—not least, we believe, because of the blessing God has promised will flow between countries which make such connections.

This past Thursday a tremendous explosion took place on a Launchpad at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The exploding rocket was made by the private aerospace company SpaceX, but tragically, *destroyed with it was a \$200 million Amos-6 Israeli-made satellite which was to have been launched two days later.* Part of its 16-year mission in space was, in collaboration with Facebook, “to bring Internet connectivity to Africa, as well as television service to providers in the Middle East and Europe.” (“Israeli satellite explodes on rocket in Cape Canaveral”: *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 Sept 2016, 12:43 IST; Emphases ours.). It is a major setback to Israel’s space program. But it is also a setback to what would have been a major communications blessing for Africa.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY THAT GOD WILL ESTABLISH STRONG AND LASTING TIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND COUNTRIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT!

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 4-10 September 2016 is called *Shophetim*- “Judges”:

TORAH: Deuteronomy 16:18—21:9

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 51:12—52:12

***Deuteronomy 16:18-21.** *“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. You shall follow what is altogether just (Literal Hebrew: “Righteousness! Righteousness you will pursue!”), that you may live and inherit the land which YHVH your God is giving you.”*

The same Hebrew words are used for “judges” (*mishpatim*) and “police officers” (*shotrim-mishterah*) in Israel today. Their duties on behalf of the people are to be executed (vs 18) with ***mishpat-tzedek—judgment which is righteous.*** These two words (*mishpat* and *tzedek*) are referred to in Psalm 89:14 as being the very “foundation” of God’s throne. Interestingly, in the Hebrew translation of John 16:8, Yeshua tells us that the “Helper” He will send after His departure will convict the world “concerning sin and righteousness (*tzedek*) and judgment (*mishpat*)”. **PLEASE PRAY:** For the powerful conviction of this Helper (the Holy Spirit) to sweep through all the echelons— Administrative, Executive and Judicial—of Israel’s Government. Alas, bribery and other forms of corruption mentioned in this passage seem especially to prey on the high places of our government today. They have in fact resulted in the stepping down of more than one President and a Prime Minister, and spawned seemingly continual accusations and investigations of those in power. **Thank God though,** that righteous judgment *does* exist in our government, that there are governmental leaders striving to be *yashar*—straight and upright. Pray that their just actions be recognized—and that leaders whose ways are crooked would be exposed. ***Pray for men and women bearing the righteousness which comes in Messiah to rise with favor into these positions*** (We know personally Messianic Jews whose voices are now being heard in the courts of the Land), ***displacing darkness with His light, diffusing the governmental atmosphere over Israel with the fragrance of God’s holiness*** (II Corinthians 2:14; 4:6; 5:21).

***Deuteronomy 17:7; 17:12b.** *“So you shall put away the evil from among you.” “So you shall put away the evil from Israel.”* The word for “put away” means *to root out* or *to burn*. **PLEASE PRAY:** for Israeli believers—that we will be merciless to evil we find within ourselves—rooting it out, destroying it, realizing that evil allowed to work within us individually pollutes not only ourselves but our nation.

***Deuteronomy 17:16.** *“But he [any future Israeli king Israel] shall not multiply horses for himself...neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.”*

Deuteronomy 17:18. *“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”*

This literally commands each Israeli king to personally physically write out for himself *a second copy* (Hebrew) of God’s Law. Did David do this? We don’t know...but it is significant that although he dearly loved God’s law, the commandment above against multiplying wives appears to have been either overlooked or ignored. He took a number of wives and concubines, some no-doubt as part of political alliances (II Sam. 5:13; I Chron. 14:3). Might the resultant variety and comparisons have had a part in ‘setting him up’ for his disastrous failure with Bathsheba? Did Solomon “write out his own second copy by hand?” so as to be careful to observe “*all the words*” the Lord had given? He not only multiplied women (over 1000 wives and concubines), but also “*horses*” (I Kings 10:26-29) and “*silver and gold for himself*” (I Kings 10:14, 27). In the end his heart was turned completely away from his God, and at his death the kingdom was split in two. **PLEASE PRAY:** *that Israel’s leaders will search the Scriptures. Our present Prime Minister has testified to regularly studying the Scriptures. Pray that he will indeed “read it all the days of his life”...and that the Holy Spirit of his God will grant him wisdom (and his children after him); that his understanding would be opened that he might “comprehend the Scriptures”—including what is written about his Messiah Yeshua/Jesus in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms! (Luke 24:44-45).*

***Deuteronomy 18:10-12.** *“There shall not be found among you anyone...who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD...”* It is sobering to read that it is not only these sins but “*those who do them*” who are an abomination to the LORD. There is much fascination with the occult in Israel. **PLEASE PRAY:** for revelation regarding the fixed law that even as one who brings an idol into his house is ‘doomed to destruction like it’ (Deut. 7:26), so anyone who engages in these occult practices places him or herself under the abomination of Almighty God. Pray for many to “come out” from this darkness into the Light! “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil*” (I John 3:8).

***Deuteronomy 18:18.** *“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** for this generation of Israelis to “*hear the words*” which the Father “*put into the mouth*” of His Prophet Yeshua, who was indeed “*raised up for them*”; and who “*spoke in His Father’s name*”. Pray for Israelis to obtain copies of the New Covenant Scriptures and find these words for themselves.

***Deuteronomy 20:9.** *“And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** that

God will move regarding our present military leadership, that Israel will have a strong, unified military and governmental leadership in place. That our present leaders will be encouraged and guided by God in whom they appoint into positions of leadership. Pray for *Elohei Ma'archot Yisrael*—the God of the Arraying of Israel (I Samuel 17:45)—to place the leaders of His choosing in each of the critical positions of Israel's army. Pray for the believing men and women in the military, to prove themselves valiant, men and women of faith and integrity.

“WHEN YOU ARE ON THE VERGE OF WAR”

***Deuteronomy 20:2-4.** *“So it shall be, when you are on the verge of war, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. And he shall say to them,*

‘Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of war with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’”

Haftarah

***Isaiah 51:16.** *“And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, lay the foundations of the earth, and say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’”*

***Isaiah 52:1-2.** *“Awake! Awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city...Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!”*

***Isaiah 52:7.** *“How beautifully the feet of those bringing good news adorn the mountains—those who proclaim shalom, who bring glad tidings of good, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”*

***Isaiah 52:8:** *“Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** for clarity and singleness of vision amongst those God is bringing back to Zion—and among those watchmen already there who are praying for them.

***Isaiah 52:11-12.** *“Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch nothing unclean...go out from the midst of her, be clean...For the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.”* This passage seems to have applied first of all prophetically to those who would be in captivity in Babylon, encouraging them regarding their return to Israel. **PLEASE PRAY:** for believing Jews still in the nations whom God is calling back to their Land—that when He speaks, they will hear His voice and GO...trusting Him to “go before”...and also to be their “rear guard.” The Hebrew word for “**rear guard**” has within it the concept of “gathering” as well as guarding against attack from behind. **Pray that God will gather the loose-ends of those He is calling—pressing them forward through the gates into their calling and place of inheritance.**



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (11-17 September 2016) are called *Ki-Tetzeh*—“When You Go Out.” TORAH: Deuteronomy 21:10—25:19 ; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 54:1-10.

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