

Prayer Update From Israel (October 1, 2012)



NOTICE: Because of this very important “Feast of the LORD” (Leviticus 23:2, 37) we are devoting this week’s Update to *Sukkot*—“The Feast of Tabernacles”. However, we believe the speech given by Benyamin Netanyahu in the UN General Assembly last Wednesday, the day following *Yom Kippur*, to be of great importance. Although the Prime Minister may not grasp all the spiritual factors surrounding the present situation with Iran (and who would expect him to), he shows remarkable insight in being able (and having the courage) to place (for those with eyes to see) some crucially important factors into a realistic and clear perspective—and that delivered with what we consider to be a sincere sense of urgency. As Jerusalem congregational leader Asher Intrater wrote in *Revive Israel Update* following the speech, “*Almost alone, the Israeli Prime Minister speaks before the international diplomatic community of biblical values and the evils of militant Islam.*” In a meeting with his friend Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (President Obama chose not to meet with the Israeli Prime Minister, instead speaking with him afterwards by phone), Netanyahu was told that his speech was now “reverberating around the world.” We believe it may be of extreme benefit both for our readers’ understanding and for their prayers if they will take the time to read the speech. The written text may be accessed by accessing one of the following sites:

<http://www.latinospost.com/articles/4677/20120927/netanyahu-un-general-assembly-2012-speech-transcript-video-iran-palestine-nuclear-obama.htm>

or:

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/full-text-benjamin-netanyahu-s-speech-at-the-united-nations-general-assembly-20120927>

SUKKOT

SUKKOT (“FEAST OF TABERNACLES”) BEGAN AT SUNDOWN SUNDAY

“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. You shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths [Hebrew: sukkot] for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 23:39-43 ESV)

Sukkot is plural for *sukkah*, which most often in the Scriptures refers to a small, rude, temporary shelter (This is something removed from the large tents or meeting halls which its English equivalent “Tabernacles” might nowadays bring to mind in some Christian circles). Nor is this Hebrew word the same as that used for the “Tabernacle” in which the Levites ministered to the LORD in the wilderness (That is *Ohel Moed*—“tent of meeting” or *Mishkan*—“dwelling place”).

In ancient times, *sukkot* were used as

- * Sheds for cattle (Genesis 33:17),
- * Guard shacks for watchmen over vineyards (Isaiah 1:8). Jonah built for himself a *sukkah* outside Nineveh (Jonah 4:5) from which to observe what God might do to that city.
- * Overnight shelters for warriors in the field (II Samuel 11:11). In Psalm 27:5 David trusts that God will hide him in His *sukkah* in the “evil day”.

As part of an annual fall “ingathering” festival after she had entered the land and was living in nice constructed houses (Exodus 23:16), Israel was called to rejoice (see Scripture passage above) and feast before the Lord for seven days, resting on the first and eighth days—but for that occasion she was also called to build and spend time in *sukkot*. They were to be decorated with leafy, fruitful boughs of foliage, and bright fragrant fruit—to bring to mind how when she was out in the desert moving from place to place in temporary dwellings, God had nevertheless provided life and beauty.

Today, we still build these tiny shelters during this festival. As we rejoice in thanksgiving before the Lord for His provision and sustenance, we remind ourselves that we are nevertheless still abiding in temporary dwellings—that, as goes the old American spiritual, “*this world is not my home, I’m just a-passin’ through*”—that ***“if our earthly house, this tent-this sukkah-is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies!”*** (II Corinthians 5:1).

Yet while we are here, this same LORD who accompanied Israel through the desert will be with us all the way. It is significant that during this season, many Jews read through the book of *Ecclesiastes*—that strange, poetic, unflinching examination of those passing “vanities” which we are tempted to attach our eyes and affections to during our journey through this earthly passage.

The feast begins and ends with a special Sabbath (Monday 1 October and Monday 8 October). Since these are “holy” days (i.e. set apart), the days between are called *chol*—“ordinary”; although many people in Israel will have an abbreviated work day, and children are out of school for the entire week.

And finally—this is the season when many Messianic Jews celebrate the coming into the world of the Holy One, Yeshua, in *Beit Lehem* (“House of Bread”—Bethlehem)—He Who Himself took on human flesh to “tabernacle” among us, and will return to dwell with us forever:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them...” (Revelation 21:3)

PLEASE PRAY:

***That Israelis discover that in order truly to “rejoice before the LORD for seven days”, they must come first into relationship with the One who came that their “joy might be full”.**

***For God’s presence to be in the “*sukkot*” of Messianic believers where many will have their devotions during this week. Many will also invite their neighbors to pay a visit there.**

***For safety and a great blessing over all the believers from the Nations who are coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast this week. Pray that they release what God would have them release—and receive what He would have them receive while they are here. Pray for understanding and graciousness on behalf of Israelis to welcome and be thankful for their presence here at this time.**

***Many Jews follow a mystical Jewish tradition which demands hospitality, because the spirits of various Patriarchs are said to sometimes arrive as visitors (*ushpazin*) to the *sukkot* of the faithful during this season. (This is in some ways not unlike the admonition to early Messianic believers, that they “*not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it*” [Hebrews 13:2].)**

PLEASE PRAY *that the awakening and convicting Holy Spirit of Yeshua (whom the Patriarchs themselves longed to see) will visit many Jews in their sukkot throughout the world this week!*



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.

Because this week contains special holy days, there are a number of extra readings designated for specific days. Among these, the following are especially significant:

**Monday 1 October 2012
1st Day of Sukkot**

Torah

Leviticus 22:26—23:44

Numbers 29:12-16

Haftarah

Zechariah 14:1-21

During Sukkot it is customary to read

Qohelet

The Book of Ecclesiastes

and

Hallel Psalms

(Psalms 113-118)

Saturday 6 October (*Shabbat Chol haMoed*): Because this Sabbath falls within Sukkot, the special readings fall outside of the normal cycle:

Torah

Exodus 33:12—34:26

Haftarah

Ezekiel 38:18—39:16

It is significant that the *Haftarah* readings for both the first day of Sukkot and for the following Sabbath include calamitous occurrences of the last days when nations will unite to come against Israel. In the holy, divine judgments released at that time, the LORD "...will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am YHVH, the Holy One **in** Israel (Ezekiel 39:7; Emphasis ours). Israel will come to know the holy name (Yeshua?) of her God in her midst—and nations will be required to acknowledge that this Holy One still chooses to identify Himself with and in the land and people of Israel. The Zechariah passage teaches that this acknowledgment will be exemplified by the nations coming annually to Jerusalem to participate in the *Feast of Sukkot* (Zechariah 14:16-19).

As a prophetic anticipation of this, the city is filled this year with thousands of believers from the nations filling the streets and joining together in various places to worship and praise. PLEASE PRAY FOR PROTECTION OF ISRAEL DURING THIS WEEK OF REJOICING—BOTH OF NATIVE ISRAELIS AND OF THOSE WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FEAST. PRAY FOR POWERFUL PRAISE TO BE RELEASED AND FOR GOD TO GRANT PROPHETIC INSIGHT FOR THOSE WITH EARS TO HEAR WHAT HIS SPIRIT IS SAYING TO THE CONGREGATIONS.



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

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