

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (October 17, 2011)



SUKKOT 2011

You shall live in booths (Hebrew: sukkot) for seven days...so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am YHVH your God” (Leviticus 23:39-43).

“...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 heavens!” (II Corinthians 5:1).

1. SUKKOT CONTINUES THROUGH THURSDAY EVENING

PLEASE PRAY:

*God’s blessing over the thousands of Christians from the nations whom God has sent to bless and stand with Israel during this week.

*Pray for God to release sound and powerful prayers, decrees and proclamations from His Throne through His intercessors.

*Pray that the power of those whom the enemy always sends to inject confusion into events like this be nullified; for religious spirits to be bound from interfering in the Holy Work which God has ordained for Jew and Gentile brothers and sisters to do together during this Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

*Pray for protection from terrorism. “Look upon my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with violent hatred” (Psalm 25:19). “Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence. I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the

living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD” (Psalm 27:12-14).

*For God to release new revelation and discernment about Israel and His timing and purposes here into those visitors who will be trustworthy wineskins after returning to their nations.

2. THE RELEASE OF GILAD SHALIT

“For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the LORD viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death, to declare the name of YHVH in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem, when the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD” (Psalm 102:19-22).

Sometime tomorrow (Tuesday 18 October) Gilad Shalit, the young soldier captured by Hamas and held in Gaza since 25 June 2006, is scheduled to be released. The agreement for his release was signed last week on the eve of Sukkot...at a time when Jerusalem is indeed filled with peoples “gathered together to declare the name of the LORD in Zion and His praise in Jerusalem.” Under an exchange deal worked out between Israel and Hamas with Egypt as intermediary, Shalit is being taken to the Sinai, at which time Israel releases 27 female Palestinian security prisoners. When he crosses into Israel another 450 major prisoners will be released, followed by 550 more within two months. 1,027 prisoners for one Israeli soldier. Over the past five years, the plight of Gilad has found a deep place in the Israeli consciousness. Israel has come to love this boy (He was still only 19 when captured); pictures are everywhere, on walls, busses, tee-shirts; a tent protesting his plight (often manned by his parents) and calling on action by the government has been in place near the Prime Minister’s house for years. A longing and seeking to work for his return has become a cause for thousands of Israelis of all ages. And the government and military have tried. Yet Israel has never been able to locate him...in fact has received only a few times proof that he was even still alive. There is a tradition going back to the War for Independence that Israel will never desert its soldiers on the battlefield. She has even gone to great lengths—including the trading of living terrorist prisoners—to retrieve the bones of those slain (In Biblical times, it was of paramount importance to Joseph and others that their remains be brought back to rest with those of their fathers).

Yet there is also a rending agonized tear in much of Israel today at the price being paid to bring this living soldier home. There are no car thieves amongst the criminals being released. Among those on the list are those responsible for planning or otherwise being involved in some of the most heinous, bloody crimes against innocent Israeli civilians—the bombing of a pizza parlor on the corner of Jaffa and King George in the heart of Jerusalem, destruction of a bus filled with civilians in Haifa, and more and more—dozens killed and countless others maimed and traumatized for life. Families and loved ones of the terrorist victims, not to mention survivors themselves, are dismayed to see the perpetrators being let free. And statistics all point to the probability that of those released, many will strike again. Israel has negotiated with terrorists (This was not a matter of negotiating for exchange of prisoners in a declared war. During Shalit’s incarceration, Hamas has denied him any of the human rights, such as visitations by the

Intl. Red Cross, demanded for captured soldiers under the Geneva Conventions.). What is to keep this negotiating from spawning more and more “Shalits” in the future? Prime Minister Netanyahu, who lost his own brother in a raid to free hostages, called the decision “One of the most difficult I have ever made.”

Yet the decision has been made. When it came for a vote to the Israeli Cabinet, it was 26 in favor, three against. Such a deal may not seem to make logical sense, and would probably only take place in Israel. Hassan Nasrallah, the head of the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah was recently quoted as saying of Israel, “We are going to win because they love life and we love death.”

“In my distress I cried to the LORD, and He heard me. Deliver my soul, O LORD from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue...My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war” (Psalm 120:1-2, 7).

PLEASE PRAY:

*For Gilad Shalit—that God would guard over his “coming in, from this day forth and forever” (Psalm 121:8). Whatever the wisdom of the workings which have affected his release, he is not responsible for those any more than for his initial capture. Pray for the Spirit of Life to breathe him alive again; that he will be restored in mind, soul and spirit; that he will come to know his true God and Savior, and live out the destiny appointed for him by a Heavenly Father who loves him.

*For those Israelis who have had their lives torn to pieces by the murderous acts of some of those being set free—only the God of All Comfort can restore and heal them. Only He can protect them from evil spirits which would make use of this occasion to exacerbate their present wounding, injecting it with bitterness and despair. Pray for their restoration to a life of hope and strength in their Messiah.

*That among those prisoners being released from Israeli prisons, there will be those who in God’s mercy will be convicted of sin and righteousness and judgment, who will have revelation and humble themselves to realize that in God’s allowing their freedom, they have been given an unexpected opportunity to choose life—to love life instead of death.

*For Mr Netanyahu to be guided in a way of humility and integrity in days ahead as he must continue governing a nation living through the aftermath of his decision, wise or not.

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.

Sukkot

Eighth Day—"Last Great Day of the Feast" (Thursday October 20th).
(Morning)

TORAH: Deuteronomy 14:22—16:17; Numbers 29:35-39.

HAFTARAH: I Kings 8:54-66.

(Evening)

Simchat-Torah "The Joy of the Torah"
(Celebrated the previous evening in Israel)

TORAH: Deuteronomy 33:1—34:12; Genesis 1:1—2:3;

HAFTARAH: Joshua 1:1-18.

This is a very special occasion—it is on this evening (of the 7th day in Israel, the eighth in the Diaspora) that the yearly cycle or reading through the five Books of Moses comes to an end. After reading Deuteronomy 33:1—34:12, the Torah Scroll is rolled back to its beginning, and 1:1-2:3 of the Book of Genesis—B'reshet—"In the Beginning..." is read. Because the Torah ends with the people poised to cross over into the Promised Land, the Haftarah for this evening is Joshua chapter one. Moses has died; attention now turns to Joshua, who will lead them in to the Promised Land. "This Book of the Law (Hebrew: Torah) shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will act wisely" (Joshua 1:8). The evening is a joyous celebration of God's Word, with song and dancing with the Torah Scroll. The closing words of the chapter in Joshua have become famous in Hebrew—"Hazak v'Ematz!"—Be Strong and Courageous!!

David and other psalmists repeatedly sang of how they loved and rejoiced in God's Law (Torah). The longest chapter in the Bible (Psalm 119) is based upon the theme, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Torah of the LORD." Yeshua (Jesus) said that those who believed in Moses in truth would believe in Him "for he wrote about Me!" (John 5:46). Of the New Covenant which would come through His blood, the LORD said through the prophet Jeremiah (31:33), "I will put my Torah in their minds, and write it on their hearts..." Galatians 3:22 teaches that the Torah is a "schoolmaster" which leads us to Messiah that we may be justified by faith. PLEASE PRAY: For those Jews who regularly read or listen to the reading of the Torah to be quickened to the presence of the Living Word, that they will call on the God of

Israel to write this Word in their hearts, that a humility will awaken which allows the Holy Spirit behind the words to lead them to Messiah!

ECCLESIASTES, SUKKOT AND THE TIMINGS OF THE LORD.

“I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God. I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it that men should fear before Him...Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 3:12-14; 12:13-14).

It is a tradition, especially in Ashkenazi Jewish synagogues, that the Book (or “Scroll”) of Ecclesiastes be read during Sukkot. As mentioned last week, there is certainly a connection between the message of a temporary shelter—a sukkah—and that of this book, a reminder that what seem our permanent dwellings are nevertheless passing, that it is the presence of the Lord who desires to accompany us in our “earthly tabernacles” through this life, which brings the everyday joys, and trials and affections into perspective with the eternal.

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a season for every delight under heaven...He has made everything beautiful in its time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-17).

This famous passage found in Chapter 3: 1-17 brings into focus how crucial it is that we be in the timings of the LORD during our temporal passage “under the sun”. The point of the last verse is not that God will cause everything to eventually turn into good...rather, it is that He appoints and oversees times and seasons and the activities of humankind appropriate for those seasons. To be successful or “made beautiful”; our activities (to plant, uproot; to kill, heal; tear down, build up...) must in the wisdom and counsel of the Holy Spirit take place in the time set apart by God. On the other hand, activities begun outside of the timing for which God has appointed them are not guaranteed the blessing of God. “Weeping” will not be made beautiful in a “time for laughter” (and vice versa)—but neither will peace be manifest if God is calling his people to war. A graphic illustration of this was British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s speech on 30 September 1938 upon his return from signing a “peace agreement” with Hitler in Munich, “I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds.” Yet it wasn’t a “time for peace” or sleeping quietly. “Our time” is not always God’s time; Germany invaded the Sudetenland the next day, and shortly thereafter England (and the world) was in the most devastating war in the history of mankind.

PLEASE PRAY:

*For Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu, that his decisions on behalf of Israel will be made in harmony with the present timings of God for His land and His people.

*For leaders of congregations throughout Israel, to be attuned to the now of God—leading their flocks in the seasons of God, hearing “what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.”

*For each unfulfilled prophecy concerning Israel will be fulfilled “in its time”—and believers both here and abroad will be attuned by God regarding the timings of “today”.

THE CYCLE BEGINS!

This weekend (22 October) the cycle through the Torah begins anew. The reading is called B’resheet—“In the Beginning”.

TORAH: Genesis 1:1—6:8

HAFTARAH : Isaiah 42:5-21

As we open to the first chapter of this God–breathed Book, God—Elohim (a plural, used grammatically as a singular) is simply there--creating. The Spirit of Elohim is there (vs. 2). And as God speaks, His living WORD is there. Within a few verses “The Adam” is created (1:27), created in Elohim’s own image—masculine and feminine (1:27). By the end of Chapter 3 that image is marred and what had received the breath of life is already dying. In 4:2 the man and woman have begun to reproduce, and their sons are bringing offerings to the LORD. In 4:8 there is murder committed, and Abel, a good man who pleases God becomes the first man to die. It is interesting that Abel’s name in the Hebrew is spelled the same as the Hebrew word for “vapor” or “vanity”, which both begins and permeates the book of Ecclesiastes which we have just been reading during the feast of Sukkot (see above). Life is but a vapor which is here and passes away, and the life of Abel the good as well as that of Cain the evil are both temporary. By Genesis 6 the earth is corrupted through sinful man in conjunction with rebellious angelic beings. “Then YHVH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...So YHVH said, ‘I will destroy the man (Hebrew: the adam) whom I have created from the face of the earth (Hebrew: the adamah).’ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (6:5,7a, 8). This is an expression which in modern Hebrew still means “to bring pleasure to.” PLEASE PRAY: that “as it was in the days of Noah”, there will be not only deepening evil on the earth, but that a multitude of latter-day “Noah’s” will also arise who bring pleasure to their LORD, who “find grace in His eyes.”



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
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[The readings for next week (23-29 October) will be called Noah. **TORAH: Genesis 6:9—11:32; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 54:1—55:5]**

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