

## PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (October 31, 2011)



*Bedouin tent and camels in the desert near the site of ancient Be'er Sheva.  
"So Abram journeyed, going on still towards the Negev."  
(Genesis 12:9; See Torah Portion below)*

### **1. ROCKETS FALLING AGAIN**

More than 40 rockets including long-range grad missile threatening Beer Sheba, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Kiryat Malachi areas have rained down on southwestern Israel during the past 24 hours. The barrage came after Israel earlier Saturday struck an Islamic Jihad rocket cell, killing a commander responsible for overseeing much of that organization's enormous rocket production. 56-year-old Ami Moshe was driving towards his home in Ashkelon when he heard the alarm sound, leapt from his car and ran for cover...but not in time; a Grad rocket exploded nearby and Moshe was ripped by the shrapnel. He was able to answer a call from his frantic wife and tell her he was on the way to hospital, but he died shortly thereafter. As of this writing at least six other Israelis have been wounded. Some 200,000 school children have stayed home from school today as classes were cancelled in the surrounding towns. A rocket hit an empty school building in Ashdod. The much-heralded "Iron Dome" defense system malfunctioned during the heat of the attack, only beginning to effectively bring down the rockets on Sunday morning.

It is presently unclear what has precipitated this latest round of attacks. One possibility is that they were ordered by Iranian and Syrian leaders who wish to divert world attention from the brutal attacks of Syrian President Assad's military on demonstrators calling for reform in his government (at least 40 were shot dead on Friday). Israel continues to strike rocket launchers and terrorist cells from the air...but if this continues it must take much stronger measures. Among its options, short of the drastic one of mounting another ground assault similar to the "Cast Lead" of a few years ago (which would undoubtedly lead to deaths of hundreds, including civilians) is that of holding back release of the 550 Palestinian prisoners still slated for release in the deal which released Gilad Shalit last week.

## **PLEASE PRAY:**

\*Physical protection of those Israelis in harm's way from these attacks. "Guard my soul, and deliver me; Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness guard me, for I hope in You."

\*Pray for mental strength, courage and presence of mind. The mental stress and anxiety can be excruciating...the continual sounding of alarms, the thump of the explosions, anxiety for children and friends, wondering why Israel won't "do something", feelings of being abandoned and no idea of when it might all somehow come to an end. Pray especially for the Messianic Jews in this area, that they will be strengthened in the inner man, and be guided in providing strength, hope and integrity for their own families and for those around them.

\*For Israel's Prime Minister and his cabinet and military leaders and advisors, that they will be given a strategy for Israel's protection and how to put a stop to these attacks.

\*That YHVH Tzevaot Elohei Ma'arkhot Yisrael –"Yehovah of Armies, God of the Arraying of Israel" (I Samuel 17:45) will fight for us, grant us His direction, that He will deal decisively with the enemies of His covenant and people Israel.

\*Continued angelic protection (Hebrews 1:14) over Jews in these regions, whom God desires to draw to Himself. We continue to see mention of 'miracles' in the news reports of missiles landing in populated neighborhoods, near apartment buildings or playgrounds...yet amazingly few casualties.

\*The wife and extended family and friends of Ami Moshi of Ashkelon...that the God of All Comfort will minister to them His compassion, guiding them into a way of living Hope and a Future.

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## **2. "MEN FOR YOU AND PEOPLE FOR YOUR LIFE."**

A member of the royal Saudi family in Saudi Arabia has pledged to donate an additional \$900,000 to a \$100,000 bounty offered by a Muslim cleric for abduction of an Israeli soldier, to be held for ransom so as to free Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Over 1000 Palestinian prisoners, some with blood on their hands, were released from Israeli jails last week in exchange for Gilad Shalit. The cleric claims to have based his offer in response to one allegedly made by an Israeli family who lost one of its members in 1998 to a terrorist who was released in last week's exchange. Already, some of those released have spoken bragging words regarding what they did and what they would do again if given an opportunity.

Meanwhile, Gilad Shalit has been recuperating with his family in the north. Surveys have shown that over 70 % of Israelis were in favor of the exchange, even though a majority believed that Israel's security might be severely compromised as a result of it.

Last week we wrote of the signs in the heavens on that day...of the Haftarah portion (Isaiah 42:5—43:10), for that week which contained a remarkably apt verse (42:7) quoted by our Prime Minister on the occasion, “To bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.” We have since had pointed out to us an equally remarkable verse, also from that same portion read the week of the exchange of prisoners resulting in Gilad’s release, “Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you and people for your life.” (Isaiah 43:4, Emphases ours).

### **PLEASE PRAY:**

\*Psalm 121...that He who watches over Israel and neither slumbers nor sleeps will guard over our soldiers... preserving their going out and their coming in, protecting them from all evil, including the enemy’s plottings to capture: “My eyes are continually on the LORD, for he will pluck my feet from the net...Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel (Hebrew: *hamas*) hatred. Guard my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You” (Psalm 25:15, 19-20).

\*For those Israelis who were deeply hurt by the exchange of prisoners—that they find comfort from God, but that they also not take the law into their own hands, releasing all vengeance to Him (Deuteronomy 32:35).

\*For Gilad Shalit to continue to be healed in body, soul and spirit. For him to be led by the Holy Spirit to know the One who was with him in his captivity, in Whose sight he is precious and loved...the One who allowed the release of men for him and people for his life.

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### **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.

The readings for this week are called Lech Lecha (“Go you forth”):

**TORAH: Genesis 12:1—17:27**

**HAFTARAH : Isaiah 40:27—41:16**

This week's portion hearkens back to the call of Abram in Ur (Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 7:2) and ends with the promise of Isaac and with Abram with his household entering into the Covenant of Circumcision. In the course of these chapters he will travel from Ur and Haran (12:4) to Canaan, passing through the land to Shechem, Bethel, the Negev (dry southland), Egypt, back to the Negev, back to Bethel, walking the land "northward, southward, eastward, and westward (13:14), Hebron, to war north of Damascus, back to Hebron. We cannot hope here to discuss all that takes place in the course of these travels; but ask the LORD to attend you as you travel with the Father of our Faith, "'Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was but one I called him, then I blessed him and multiplied him.' Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places..." (Isaiah 51:1-3a).

\*Genesis 12:2a. "I will make you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Hebrew for "nation" is *goy*; "great nation" is *goy gadol*. In Modern Hebrew slang, *goy* and *goyim* (plural) are often used in reference to individuals or peoples who are non-Jews/Gentiles. Scripture itself most often uses *goyim* to refer to nations other than Israel. However, here God is speaking to an individual human being drawn from one of the nations, who in his descendants would become a great nation in which families throughout the earth would be blessed. It may be significant that "earth" here is *adamah*—soil (from which adam—human beings were formed). God saw and continues to see this people as an individual nation before him of the seed of Abraham...and his blessing through them is on behalf of all humankind He has formed.

\*Genesis 12:2. "I will make a great nation of you and will give-you-blessing and will make your name great. Be a blessing! (Everett Fox translation; emphases ours). In the Hebrew the last three words are clearly a command/imperative form. God isn't saying here that Abraham and his seed "will be" a blessing; rather, he is speaking a command into that seed, "BE!" Indeed, a blessing to all the children of Adam through that seed would be released in the coming of Messiah. However, the holy command has never been annulled. The workings of God for all humankind continue to be mirrored in his workings in this People...as such, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, she continues to "Be a Blessing". And as Israel returns to her fullness through recognizing and receiving her Messiah, her acceptance will be "life from the dead"! (Romans 11:15).

\*Genesis 12:7-8. "Then YHVH (The LORD) appeared to Abram and said, 'To your seed I will give this land.' And there he built an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him. And he moved/shifted from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent...where he built an altar to YHVH and called on the name of YHVH." Wonderful things happened in Shechem (modern-day Nablus). The God of Glory had appeared to Abram while still in Ur (Acts 7:2). Now after a long and arduous journey, he appeared again! Look at the Scripture again...Shechem certainly appeared to be:

- A legitimate destination of God's leading.
- A place of God's revealed Presence
- A place of the releasing of God's prophetic Word

- A place of established worship to “the One who reveals Himself”

It seemed the ideal place to settle down. Yet one verse later Abraham moves to Bethel. The word translated “moved” also means to “take a shift” (Robert Alter translates it “pulled up his stakes”). As we saw during the recent Sukkot festival, God “makes everything beautiful in its time or season (Ecclesiastes 3:11)...but he is under no obligation to beautify if the season for our being a certain place has passed and we insist on staying there. Abram took his “shift”...and a much greater blessing awaited him at Bethel, a place he would return to time and time again...and to which his grandson Jacob would return to find an open heavens with the angels still ascending and descending.

\*Genesis 14:5. “In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness...And the king of Sodom went out to meet him [i.e. Abraham] after his striking down Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him...”. Abraham pursued and struck down this king who himself had struck down the Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, and the Horites. It is fascinating to discover how almost 500 years later in Deuteronomy 2:10, 12, 20, 22; 3:11, descendants of each of these peoples, whose height and cruel renown had paralyzed with fear ten of the twelve spies 40 years before, are dispatched quickly by the children of that generation before their advancement into Canaan. Perhaps Joshua and Caleb had been taught how the God of their father Abraham had easily given him victory over a king who had subdued all of these feared peoples.

\*Genesis 14:19. “Then Melchizedek king of Shalem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of El Elyon (God Most-High). Just as English god comes from an old Anglo-Saxon expression for deity, the Canaanites word for god was el, and they had many elelim. Soon after Abram entered Canaan, the One who had appeared to him in Ur and Shechem began to reveal aspects of His nature which made clear how this “El” differed from all the other “el’s” crowding the land. These attributes are reflected in a number of descriptive names which began to be used by Abraham and his descendants...El Elyon is the El (or God) who is “most High”—El Roi (16:13) is El who “Sees”—El Shaddai (17:1) is El who is “Almighty and sustains all life”.

\*Genesis 15:6. “And he believed in YHVH, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

\*Genesis 16:4b-5a. “And when she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [Sarai] became despised in her eyes. Then Sarai said to Abram, ‘May the wrong done me be upon you!’”

We must realize that the struggle reflected in Hagar’s actions and Sarai’s response is something of a far greater magnitude than anything of which either of these women could have been aware. Far from being merely a domestic squabble (although, so it may have seemed to them), a cosmic spiritual battle was raging over God’s covenant on behalf not only of Abraham’s descendants but of the whole Human Race! When Sarai speaks wildly to Abram of the “wrong” being done her, she uses the word hamas—a word used other places in the Hebrew Bible for “cruel violence” (Genesis 49:5; Psalm 25:19; 27:12). A great Enemy was seeking to divert the line of Covenant which God had determined to come through Sarai’s womb (Genesis 17:21); this covenant-hating Power of “cruel violence” was trying to tear her apart. This same battle is still raging! The

Muslim religion teaches that God's Covenant went through Ishmael, not Isaac. The power behind this falsehood hates Life, and the God of Life, and rules those presently under its dominion with Hamas. PLEASE PRAY: That Muslims will be freed from a power of cruel violence which has sought to keep them outside the covenant of God Most High. Pray for dreams and visions...for a powerful working of the Holy Spirit of God who sheds abroad in hearts the Love that the Father has for them. Pray that perfect love from the Most High God will be discovered to come through a knowledge of Jesus...and that that perfect Love will cast out fear.



*Martin & Norma Sarvis  
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week (6-12 November) will be called VaYera—Was Seen. TORAH: Genesis 18:1—22:24; HAFTARAH: II Kings 4:1-37]

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