

Prayer Update From Israel (October 7, 2013)



*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. MR. NETANYAHU'S ADDRESS IN NEW YORK

We would strongly encourage each of our readers to read the speech given by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations last Tuesday (Which may be accessed by "Googling": **Full text Netanyahu's 2013 speech to the UN General Assembly**). We know that many were praying for him regarding that speech. What came forth was brilliant, eloquent—even poetic; at times ironic and sarcastic, yet ringing with truth, integrity, and an anointed immediacy, to our minds not often heard on the world stage since the orations over seventy years ago of Winston Churchill when his country also found itself in deadly crisis. The substance of his speech was a detailed and documented case for not being led astray by the smooth words of Iran's President Rouhani, who, as we mentioned last week, is answerable in every way to his supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei. He pointed out the duplicity of the new President as evidenced by statements he has made in the past when he was Iran's chief nuclear negotiator; he laid out in detail the progress in Iran towards development of a nuclear weapon, and what its acquisition will mean for the world if the West is deceived into easing sanctions and dropping all pressure against the Iranian regime before obtaining verifiable proof that the regime has changed its direction. He paralleled the present danger to the promises of North Korea in 2005 which led the West into believing their nuclear weapons program might be dismantled—a year before it in fact exploded its first nuclear device. And if no one else will hold Iran's fanatical leaders accountable, Israel may have to stand alone:

Ladies and gentlemen, Israel will never acquiesce to nuclear arms in the hands of a rogue regime that repeatedly promises to wipe us off the map. Against such a threat, Israel will have no choice but to defend itself. I want there to be no confusion on this point. Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone. Yet, in standing alone, Israel will know that we will be defending many, many others.

After his speech, the Prime Minister was accused in the *NY Times* the next day of “sabotaging diplomacy” with his “aggressive speech”—of being in danger of influencing others to be “so blinded by distrust of Iran that they exaggerate the threat, [and] block President Obama from taking advantage of new diplomatic openings.” What was not alluded to in the *Times* editorial was the fact that Mr. Netanyahu began his speech with an olive branch towards Iran—based on recorded history:

Today our hope for the future is challenged by a nuclear-armed Iran that seeks our destruction. But I want you to know, that wasn't always the case. Some 2,500 years ago the great Persian king Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. He issued a famous edict in which he proclaimed the right of the Jews to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. That's a Persian decree. And thus began an historic friendship between the Jews and the Persians that lasted until modern times. But in 1979 a radical regime in Tehran tried to stamp out that friendship. As it was busy crushing the Iranian people's hope for democracy, it always led wild chants of “death of the Jews.”

We will say here that this act by Cyrus towards the Jews (prophesied, long before it took place, in Isaiah 45:1, where Cyrus was actually called God's *messiah*—“anointed”), we believe released a redemptive grace over that land which may still be tapped into by those who have an ear to hear.

The Prime Minister ended his speech with a story of his own grandfather, a descendant of the Maccabees, who was beaten and left for dead by a raging mob of anti-Semites in 19th century Europe—but who survived to bring his family to the Jewish homeland of Israel. He then quoted from Amos 9:14-15:

In our time the Biblical prophecies are being realized. As the prophet Amos said, “*They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine. They shall till gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them upon their soil never to be uprooted again.*” Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again!

PLEASE PRAY:

*For protection for Mr. Netanyahu—a continued ‘rear guard’ against repercussions from his speech of a week ago.

*That he continue to maintain his resolve—that he not become embittered or proud from negative responses to what he spoke forth, but be humble before his God who strengthened him to deliver a strong word in season.

*That God would counsel him further with ‘where to go from here’ regarding protection of the land over which he has been given stewardship as Prime Minister.

*For wisdom, insight and courage for the many governmental leaders to whom Mr. Netanyahu was able to speak personally during his visits to New York and Washington, as well as those who were influenced by his speech.

*For continued redeemable intercourse between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama.

*For an awakening in Iran of the divine heritage of good which was once loosed in their land through a leader who blessed, rather than cursed, Israel (See Genesis 12:1-3 of this week's Torah Portion below). For an understanding that the God of Israel is also the God of all Nations, that He who once released His anointing over a leader in Iran (Persia) and called him "My servant"—has power and mercy to do so in the future.

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 Forth, Yourself!"

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 (his name now changed to "Abraham") 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), to 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.

***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. But this 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 *elemim*. 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”. By verse 22, Abram realizes that the God who had appeared to him as YHVH in Ur and Shechem (12:1; 12:7-8) and this *El Elyon* are One and the same, *“I raise my hand to YHVH El Elyon, the possessor of Heaven and earth...”*

***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. It is a grim coincidence that the present-day Arabic acronym for “Islamic Resistance Movement” happens to be spelled and pronounced the same way). 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 a divine 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 knowledge of Jesus...and that that perfect Love will cast out fear.**

Genesis 17:4-12. *“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations...I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your seed after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God...This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations....”*

It is significant that the first two locations where God promised to give “this land” to Abraham’s seed—*Shechem* (modern day Nablus), Genesis 12:7; *Bethel*, Genesis 13:14-15 (and probably *Hebron*, Genesis 15:18, 17:1-14) are located in the area of the “Mountains of Israel”, currently known to much of the world as the “West Bank”. It is this same area which Israel is being constantly pressured to surrender for establishment of a permanent Muslim Palestinian state. We also find it significant that during the past two years, circumcision has come under fire in a number of places in the west—including certain areas of the United States and Europe. It must be remembered that although these efforts to ban circumcision are being made under the banner of protecting the rights of children—the ritual itself was given to the Hebrews as their part of a covenant by Almighty God (Genesis 17:1) specifically related their eternal stewardship of this same land. **This past week the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling male ritual circumcision a “violation of the physical integrity of children.”** This is presently a “non-binding” resolution—but is nevertheless a troubling symptom of a rising sentiment against Jews continuing to practice the sign of God’s covenant which eternally binds them to the land once called “Canaan”, including the furiously contested areas of Judea and Samaria and all of Jerusalem.

Genesis 17:18-22. *“And Abraham said to God, ‘Oh that Ishmael might live before You!’ Then God said, But Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.’ Then he finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”*

After Abraham asks God that Ishmael may “live before Him”, God does not answer “No” (as many English versions translate), nor “Yes” (as the NIV translates)—the Hebrew simply says, “But, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son...” Ishmael shall indeed live before him—become a nation with “twelve princes”—a prophecy which is shown fulfilled in Genesis 25:16. But the important word here is “covenant” (vss. 19, 21). God’s covenants are covenants of life for all humankind—and this one, on behalf of all humanity must come through Isaac. Here we see the departing of the ways between Judaism and Christianity and Islam. As mentioned above, Islam teaches that Ishmael was the chosen vessel, not Isaac—that it was he who yielded himself to sacrifice. Any covenant which comes in opposition to God’s covenant cannot be a covenant of life. **Please Pray** for revelation amongst Muslims that God’s covenant through Isaac led to the

birth of Yeshua (Arabic: *Yasua*) who was the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life* for all children of Adam!

***Isaiah 41:8-13.** *“But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My beloved...You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts and said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’ Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. For I am the YHVH your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’”*



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[The readings for next week (13-19 October 2013) is called *VaYera*—“Was Seen”: TORAH: Genesis 18:1—22:24; HAFTARAH: II Kings 4:1-37]

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