

Prayer Update From Israel (November 21, 2016)



Site of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron today.

“After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites”

(Genesis 23:18-19; See Torah Portion below)

1. SOUND POLLUTION IN THE ATMOSPHERE OVER JERUSALEM AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty (Psalm 93:4).

For the Lord is going to destroy Babylon, And He will make her loud noise vanish from her. And their waves will roar like many waters; The tumult of their voices sounds forth (Jeremiah 51:55).

Above every Islamic mosque rises a minaret, a tall thin tower usually adjoined to the mosque wall. In earlier times, a *muezzin* [myu-EZ-in] would climb the tower five times a day, emerging onto a circular balcony near the top, from which he would lead Muslims in the surrounding area through the proscribed prayers. (Praying these prayers comprises one of the “Five Pillars” of Islam.) With the development of electrically amplified sound, during the past century more and more mosques began installing loudspeakers on the minarets. When cranked too loud, this can cause annoyance to everyone (including first of all, the citizens of the Muslim neighborhood). In Egypt, Indonesia, India and many cities in Europe, laws have been passed limiting the levels of the speakers, or, in some cases banning them altogether. The Koran itself instructs *“Do not recite (too) loudly in your prayer or (too) quietly, but seek between that an (intermediate) way”* (Surah al-Israh, 17:110). In designing the new Grand Mosque of Marseille, France, some years ago, officials sought to avert this issue by laying out plans for total silence—no muezzin,

live or recorded; rather, a flashing beam of light would be released from the minaret for several minutes five times a day. This issue of overly-loud amplifiers is a concern which continues to be addressed by Muslims themselves throughout the world.

But such has not been the case in Israel, especially Jerusalem. At 4:00 a.m. many mosques start up here, with the volume sometimes turned up so as to be heard within a five-kilometer radius. If there are several minarets within the same vicinity (there are four on the Temple Mount alone), they often overlap, one awakening as the other subsides. Recently, the issue was brought to the Knesset floor by an MK from Pisgat Ze'ev in northern Jerusalem. There the problem has intensified steadily over the past five years as new mosques have been built in nearby Muslim communities. Set on the crests of hills and in valleys, they can release a cacophonous, re-echoing din. Particularly in summer, when families without airconditioning are required to keep their windows opened, the whole house is shaken awake in evenings and very early each morning. The same can be said in many places around Jerusalem. Although there exists a "Law for the Prevention of Nuisances" which prohibits making unreasonably loud noises, the authorities have been lax in enforcing it as related to mosques—presumably out of fear of stirring up accusations of religious discrimination. So the sound of this one religion over the city gets louder and louder. (The only sound from the Jewish side is a one-minute siren thirty minutes before sundown on Friday afternoons to alert families to prepare for Shabbat.)

Last week the Ministerial Committee on Legislation approved for first reading in the Knesset a bill which would outlaw the use of outdoor loudspeakers in all houses of worship. Obviously aimed at the misuse of these systems in mosques, the legislation would prevent loud calls to prayer and "conveying religious or nationalist messages, or even words of incitement." (During times of tension, the speakers have been known to send out messages from Hamas, calling Muslim citizens to violent confrontation with Israeli authorities.) At his weekly cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed his support for the bill, claiming that "citizens of all religions" have complained about the excessive noise from the muezzins, that "Israel is committed to freedom for all religions, but is also responsible for protecting its citizens from noise."

Predictably, the proposed legislation has awakened a storm. Last week, convinced by their mullahs that this was an attack upon their religion, thousands of Muslims across Israel demonstrated against it (this despite the fact that the noise is an unnecessary infringement upon the peace of their own neighborhoods as well). The Kingdom of Jordan's highest religious authority called the move "false and insignificant" because "an occupier (i.e. Israel) cannot make any historical change to the city it occupies [Jerusalem]." Jordan's present treaty with Israel requires that that kingdom maintains custodianship of the Islamic holy sites on the Temple Mount (jointly patrolled with Israeli security forces). The Jordanian religious authority went on to declare that the call to prayer from the Al-Aqsa Mosque's loudspeakers would "remain forever". And criticism is rapidly heating in Arab internet media around the world. It is uncertain whether the bill will be able to pass. If its being brought forward can result in tighter enforcement of the existing laws, perhaps it won't be necessary. Either way, there is no question that the Enemy would like to use the issue as a means of roiling up accusation and violence in the land.

All of this is, of course, related to a spiritual war for the atmosphere over this nation, and over the capital where the King will one day reign. Praise God! --that there is a growing Body of believers in the Land, whose praises and declarations, along with those of visiting Brothers and Sisters from the Nations, are rising to displace the darkness pressing in from above. There are presently at least four houses of prayer and worship as well as many congregations in Jerusalem releasing continual praise and supplication to the Most High!

PLEASE PRAY:

- * That the Lord will guide Israel's government and law-enforcement officers in what measures are best to take at this time in controlling noise levels from the amplifiers on minarets around the country and in Jerusalem. Pray that laws would be fair for all, and would be enforced.**
- * That the Prince of the Power of the Air will not be allowed to cross the line appointed as his domain during this season. That he will not have dominance in forcing falsehood and violence day and night through the air, into the experience of those living in Israel and Jerusalem. Pray that angels be released over Israel and Jerusalem to enforce this.**
- * That false religious systems which have captured the air over Israel for centuries would come down.**
- * That the Sounds of Heaven would invade earth over Jerusalem. That God will release High Praise and Worship in Spirit and in Truth , Holy Confession and Testimony from His servants into the atmosphere throughout Israel. That it light and truth will displace regions of darkness over the city and the Land.**

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 20-26 November 2016 are called *Chayeh Sarah*—"Sarah's Life":

TORAH: Genesis 23:1—25:18

HAFTARAH: I Kings 1:1-31

***Genesis 23:1.** *“Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.”* Abraham was ten years older than Sarah—he was 137 years old at her death. Perhaps the supernatural rejuvenation granted Abraham enabling him to conceive Isaac remained in his body long afterwards. After the death of Sarah he was to live another 38 years and to have more children.

***Genesis 23:5-6 (NKJ).** *“And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, ‘Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places.”* The Hebrew words for “mighty prince” are *n’si elohim* which might more literally be translated “Prince of God.” Abraham’s relationship with this God, whom he had believed and worshipped, had developed into a friendship. The very city of Mamre where God confided in Abraham (Genesis 18) would come to be called *Hevron* (Hebron), related to the Hebrew word for “friend” or “associate”. Centuries later, God would, in Isaiah 41:8, still refer to Abraham as “My beloved” or “My friend.” Through this holy association the authority and splendor of God Himself rested in favor upon His servant, and the blessing promised in Abraham to all families of the world (Genesis 12:3) was already shining into the darkness of Canaan.

***Genesis 23:12-18.** *“Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, ‘If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there.’...And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants. So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.”*

It is significant that the locations of three carefully recorded transactions involving the purchase of land by two Patriarchs and a great King of Israel today encompass the most hotly contested area (both physically and spiritually) on earth:

* A field and cave in Hebron (which Abraham purchased for 400 shekels of silver) Genesis 23

* A parcel of land in Shechem (modern-day Nablus) where Joseph would be buried (which Jacob purchased for 100 pieces of money) Joshua 24:32

* The top of Mount Moriah, what would become the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (which David purchased for 50 shekels of silver) II Samuel 24:24; II Chronicles 3:1

These three locations today comprise the length of the so-called “West Bank” upon which a permanent Muslim Palestinian state is being demanded: To the north, Samaria (Shechem/Nablus), In the center, Jerusalem (The Temple Mount), To the south, Judea (Hebron—the Cave of the Patriarchs). Each of these locations were legally purchased by Hebrews in ancient times, and all fall within an area God would repeatedly promise to give as an inheritance to the physical seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob forever.

***Genesis 24:3:** “*And I will make you swear by YHVH, Elohei-haShamayim* (“The Heavens-God”) *v’Elohei-haAretz* (and “The Land-God”).” As often happens in the Torah, new aspects and attributes of this YHVH (Yehovah), who had first appeared to Abraham in Ur, are revealed to us through the new Names given to Him by the Patriarchs.

***Genesis 24:5-6.** “*And the servant said to him, ‘Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Beware! that you do not take my son back there. YHVH God of Heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, , and you shall take a wife for my son from there”* (Emphases ours).

Abraham continued to *Believe YHVH* his God (Gen. 15:6). “Believing God” meant *not looking back*—Hebrews 11:15 makes clear that “*truly if they* (Abraham and the other Patriarchs) *had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.*”

Please Pray: for immigrants whom God brings back to Israel. It can be frighteningly hard (See main story of last week’s Update), especially for the older ones who will have difficulty mastering the language (if at all); who likely will not be able to get a job related to what they’ve done all their lives before immigrating. Pray that they will not listen to the temptations to “go back to America,” or to “go back to Russia,” or France. Pray for grace and mercy for absorption into the society in the land of their Fathers...but more importantly, into the God of their Fathers. *Pray for the Body of Messiah here—that it also will not look back, but rather fare forward into “a better, that is, a heavenly country.”*

***Genesis 24:12.** “*Then he* [Abraham’s servant] *said, ‘O YHVH God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show loving kindness with my master Abraham.’*”

The literal Hebrew for the phrase “please give me success this day” reads, “*Please make it happen before me today!*”

***Genesis 24:27.** “*And he said, ‘Blessed be the YHVH God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His loving kindness* (Hebrew: *hesed*) *and His truth* (Hebrew: *emet*) *toward my master.’*”

Hesed and Emet

Hesed (the beginning letter pronounced with a slight rasp in the throat) is one of the most precious words in the Hebrew language. It is difficult to translate exactly into English—*loving kindness, mercy, goodness, steadfast love*. It is a wonderful attribute of God which He desires to see operating in his children. *Hesed* appears over 245 times in the Hebrew Bible. On certain special occasions it is found together with the word *emet* which means *truth* (Gen. 24:27, Exodus 34:6, II Sam. 2:6; 15:20, Micah 7:20, and Psalms 25:10; 26:3; 40:10-11; 57:3; 61:7; 85:1; 86:15; 89:14; 115:1; 117:2; 138:2). The Modern Hebrew translation of John 1:17 says, “*For the Torah*

(Law) was given through Moses; and the *hesed* and the *emet* (i.e. lovingkindness and truth) came through Yeshua the Messiah!”

***Genesis 24:31.** “*And he* [i.e. Laban, Rebekah’s brother] *said, ‘Come in, O blessed of YHVH!’*” During the long years between YHVH’s call to Abram and the death of his father in far-away Haran, his testimony of this new and wonderful God whose name was YHVH had obviously born lasting fruit. At least some knowledge of YHVH had lingered in Haran through the many years after Abram had moved on to Canaan, so that when his servant arrives, he finds that Abraham’s brother’s son and grandchildren are still very knowledgeable of this God (24:31, 50).

***Genesis 24:55-56, 62-64.** “*But her* (i.e. Rebekah’s) *brother and her mother said, ‘Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go.’ And he* (i.e. Abraham’s servant) *said to them, ‘Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master.’...Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi* (i.e. “Well of the Living One who Sees Me”), *for he dwelt in the South. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field towards evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel...*”

Being in the *timings of the LORD* is essential in entering into destiny—or even assisting those to whom we minister in entering into theirs. Ecclesiastes 3:11 teaches that God makes everything beautiful *in its time* (It does *not* teach that He does so if something is *out* of its season). If the servant had waited—even another hour—the perfect *kairos* meeting God had arranged for Rebekah and Isaac would have been compromised—which could have affected the very course of God’s redemptive plan for all humankind. “*Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi* (i.e. “Well of the Living One who Sees Me”), *for he dwelt in the South. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field towards evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.*” Dwelling and meditating in the Presence (before the face) of the “*One who sees us,*” prepares and times us to lift our own eyes for to see and recognize when provision for our destiny is approaching.

***Genesis 24:59.** “*So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant had his men...*” This nurse (whose name was Deborah) must have been a holy woman—obviously she had a very special significance in the life of Rebekah. Might she have been one on whom the “light” of the testimony of Abraham decades before had most truly “caught” and continued to glow? May she have been learning to walk with this wonderful God in Haran and to know His ways, even as Abraham was undergoing the same schooling in far-away Canaan? Besides being a blessing from childhood to Rebekah, she must have had an equally strong influence upon Jacob, both as a child and as a young adult. Perhaps she accompanied him during his sojourn to her former homeland in Aram. If not, he must have contacted her shortly after his return to Canaan, for she is apparently with him when he returns to Bethel to build an altar to the God Who had appeared to him years before whilst running from Esau. It was here that she died and was buried, obviously greatly loved; the tree beneath which she was buried was named, “The Oak of Weeping” (Gen. 35:8).

***Genesis 24:65.** *“Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”*

In 24:32, we see that Rebekah had lived with her family in a “house” in Haran. Her great-uncle Abraham had himself once lived there—but God had moved him on—into a destiny in which he and his immediate sons and grandchildren lived in tents as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13-16). By moving in obedience to the word of YHVH to leave, as had Abraham (Gen. 12:1), Rebekah demonstrated herself possessed of that same faith:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God!”

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:8-10, 16b)

***Genesis 25:1-5.** *“Abraham again took a wife (or “woman”), and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah...And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Eopher, Hanoah, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.”*

This passage and I Chronicles 1:32-33 are the only places where Keturah and other possible wives or concubines of Abraham (apart from Sarah and Hagar) are mentioned. After Isaac and the death of Sarah, a renewed and strengthened Abraham lived on for 38 years. God gave him other children whom he loved. Yet the Covenant was to be established through Isaac (17:21). And this covenant involved first of all, who would be granted stewardship of the physical *land* of Canaan (12:7; 15:18; 17:7-8). God would bless these other children of Abraham—but their ultimate inheritances would have to be outside of the land of covenant.

According to the NASB English translation of Genesis 16:12 (a sentence of difficult certain meaning in the Hebrew), the Angel of YHVH prophesied over Hagar concerning Ishmael that, ***“he shall live to the east of all his brothers.”*** Here (25:5) we see that Abraham eventually felt led to send his other sons *“eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east”* (after giving them each special gifts to sustain them on their way). There is no indication in the Scriptural account that there was any sort of cruel “banishment” involved here. By this time Abraham’s sons were probably grown and had families of their own (The phrase, “while he was still living” implies that Abraham was nearing the end of his life at the time, 38 years after the death of Sarah). Perhaps they had grown up knowing that since God had promised it to the descendants of Isaac, Canaan would not always be their home. It appears that just as Ishmael was sent away at God’s command (Gen. 21:12), so too were the children of Keturah; and as He had done with Ishmael so would God also bless and care for them. Through Abraham’s obedience, there would remain within the covenant land none of his lineage to contest the

inheritance which God had decreed must go through his Isaac (their inheritance must be elsewhere). Through Isaac's lineage would come a Savior, not only for the Jews, but for all humankind—One who will one day reign from a throne in the center of that same land over the entire world.



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week (27 November—3 December 2016) are called *Toldot*—“Generations”. TORAH: Genesis 25:1`9—28:9; HAFTARAH: Malachi 1:1—2:7]

You may give to our work in Israel by donating online (click [HERE](#) and add Sarvis Support in the comment line) or by calling *1-888-965-1099* or *1-940-382-7231*.