

Prayer Update From Israel (November 26, 2012)



Rainbow over Mount of Olives, Mount Zion and Temple Mount
12 November 2012

All of these territories would fall within the borders of the “state” which Palestinian Authority leader Abbas plans to propose to the General Assembly of the United Nations this Thursday (See# 2 below)

1. QUIET...A TIME OF RESPITE TO BE UTILIZED SERIOUSLY

Things are quiet in Israel since a cease-fire between Israel and the militant forces in Gaza went into effect last Wednesday.

During the hostilities, polls showed that a majority of Israelis strongly backed Israel’s strong stance with “Operation Pillar of Cloud”, although the same polls consistently showed that a majority of Israelis were hesitant about beginning a ground operation. With Israel’s agreement to the cease-fire, there seems to have been a general feeling of let-down, a weary, troubled sense of futility—that we stopped too soon, without having accomplished enough goals, having agreed to too many concessions. Part of the feeling comes from having called up and deployed tens of thousands of reserve forces to join with the regular forces in preparation to enter the Strip. The resultant trauma in families across the country, not to mention in the soldiers themselves; for them the grim resolve to “gird up oneself” for going into danger, because it must be done, only to sit there expectantly for days, and then be sent home...and this with a realization their even their arrayed presence before the point of entry doesn’t seem to have in any way intimidated Hamas or served to stem the flow of rocket fire. Suddenly many voices were springing up in the media leveling criticism for not having begun a ground operation; political figures who seemed to stand behind the government three days before were now leveling accusations of weakness, indecision or timidity towards the present leaders. Of course, many are claiming victory— a jeering and boasting Hamas, Egypt, the United States; Israel’s own Prime Minister and military Chief of Staff have claimed that the Israeli operation “achieved all of its objectives.” There was a horrendous amount of destruction done to Hamas’ infrastructure within the

Strip, and many, many long-range weapons were destroyed. But no one in Israel is under any delusion that anything permanent been done— Hamas and the militant factions within the Gaza Strip have not been neutralized, nor their resolve broken or altered in any way. Things have quieted, but no one in Israel doubts that it will happen again—and then a ground offensive will be necessary.

And yet—we are grateful for the peace at hand, for the many lives living today on both sides which by now almost certainly would have been lost had a ground operation begun last week. And whether it was ultimately the wisest move for Israel to make at the time, it is simplistic to automatically attribute Israel's compliance with the cease-fire proposals to weakness. There were other important factors being weighed, not least 'timing' (Many were praying that God would govern Israel's actions, particularly her leaders' sense of timing in their decisions). A ground operation was not something which would have been over in a week or two—many analysts think it would have extended into several months. And Israel's elections are still two months away. And what of the Iranian nuclear threat which is still marching towards the point beyond which any military intervention would be useless? If Israel feels it necessary to attack Iranian nuclear sites in late winter or early spring, it does not wish to be bogged down in a ground war in Gaza, and it would prefer a strong new government behind it rather than a weak temporary one (Last week there was serious talk of putting off the elections if the troops went in). In the meantime, the eight-day war served to allow Israel to test its short-range missile defense system, and granted it valuable information needed in the development of defenses against medium and long-range missiles as well (Israel estimates that there are presently around 200,000 rockets and missiles pointed at her from Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas). A New York Times article the day after the cease-fire was entitled, or Israel, Gaza Conflict is Test for an Iran Confrontation).

PLEASE PRAY:

***That Israel will use this time of 'reprieve' wisely—taking sound account of what was revealed during the eight-day conflict, both regarding vulnerable areas which need to be strengthened and newly revealed aspects of the enemy's armament which need to be taken into account.**

***That believers in Israel will also use this time to "take account"—of areas within which the Holy Spirit may have revealed vulnerabilities in our spiritual armor; that we become alert where we had become slack; that we would be connected with other believers, remove spiritual obstacles out of our lives, "*gird up the loins of our minds and be sober...*" (I Peter 1:13), that we can stand alert and united in Yeshua in the evil day.**

***That Israel's government and military gain clear and accurate intelligence reports from the conflict last week and be granted insight in how best to proceed in strengthening herself for the future.**

***Encouragement for the believers in the military—that they see God's hand during this season—that they hear what He is saying and be strengthened in His Word.**

***Courage and refreshing for the spirits of the Israeli people. "*Many are saying, 'Who will show us good?' Raise like a banner over us the light of your face, LORD!*"**

***A strong, courageous and watchful path for the nation's government during the next two months—that God will place the leaders of his choice into place in the Government on January 22nd.**

***That a spirit of supplication and grace would brood over the Israelis in Jerusalem and throughout Israel—drawing them towards a place of looking to God as our hope and our peace.**

2. A LOOMING VOTE IN THE UN

We find it significant that this week in which the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas plans to ask the UN to upgrade the status of territory claimed by Muslims in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and Jerusalem to that of a “state” (albeit one which would have a status of “non-member observer”), the following verses appear in the weekly *Parasha* (See below):

Genesis 33:19. In which is a record of Jacob physically purchasing with money a parcel of land in Shechem (modern-day Nablus, within the area of Samaria which would fall within the bounds of the Muslim ‘state’).

Genesis 35:12. A "re-giving" by *El Shaddai*—“God Almighty” of the land previously given to Abraham and Isaac to Jacob and His seed. This appearing and bequeathal took place at Bethel, lying north of Jerusalem, also within the bounds of Mr. Abbas’ proposed state.

Genesis 36; Book of Obadiah (Haftarah) This 36th chapter of Genesis is completely taken up with a genealogy of Esau/Edom. The *Book of Obadiah* is taken up with God's wrath against Edom (Amalek descended from Edom...whose covenant-hating spirit God vowed to be always at war against—See Below). We believe the spirit behind Islam to be linked with the spirit of Edom.

Defying the requests of the US, France, Germany and Britain to postpone his plan, Mr. Abbas appears determined to go through with his request at the UN. As pointed out by European Coalition for Israel Chairman Tomas Sandell:

*A Palestinian statehood bid at this time violates international law and is in breach of the Oslo agreements [to which the PA is signatory] which state that no party can take unilateral action before a final settlement is reached through negotiations.

*The Palestinian Authority does not meet the criteria for statehood as they do not control their own territory. Abbas has not been allowed in to Gaza since he was kicked out in 2007. Neither do the PA have peace with their neighbors.

*A premature upgrade of PA as a non-member state would pre-define the borders along the 1967 [i.e. 1949] armistice lines. These are not recognized borders under international law. Final borders can only be negotiated, not proclaimed by one party alone.

*The proposed PA state would divide Jerusalem and make the Old City the capital of an Islamic Palestinian state. This would close off the Holy sites for the Jewish people who would have to leave the city.

PLEASE PRAY (We include prayer points from our 12 November Update):

***That Mr. Abbas will be dissuaded from his plan to ask for statehood status in the UN this Thursday. Pray for believers, such as a delegation from the European Coalition for Israel who will be on-site praying and reaching out to delegates, that ambassadors will become aware of the factors above and be persuaded not to vote in favor of statehood.**

***For integrity and wisdom for Israel’s leaders to ‘know what to do’, whatever decisions are made regarding Israel in the UN. “*Who is the man who fears the LORD, He will instruct him in the way he should choose*” (Psalm 25:12).**

***Ezekiel 36 over the “Mountains of Israel” (i.e. Judea and Samaria).**

***Zechariah 9:5-7 over Gaza.**

THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) 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 25 November—1 December are called *VaYishlach*—"And [Jacob] Sent"

TORAH: Genesis 32:3—36:43

HAFTARAH : Obadiah 1:1-21

***Genesis 32:3.** *"Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom." The word translated "messengers" is the same as that translated "angels" two verses earlier. Angels is an English word used to designate "heavenly" messengers; these are messengers of Jacob.*

***Genesis 32:9-10.** *"O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD [YHVH]...I am not worthy of the least of all the lovingkindnesses and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies." As we have often mentioned, "Lovingkindness and Truth" (Hebrew: *chesid* and *emet*) form a pairing of divine attributes and blessings which appear many times throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. A Modern Hebrew translation of John 1:17 reads (English paraphrase), *"For the Torah was given through Moshe, chesid and emet [lovingkindness and truth] came through Yeshua the Messiah."* Please pray for discovery, revelation and understanding among the Jewish people of the presence of Yeshua (Jesus) throughout their holy writings (Luke 24:44-45)—a recognition that He was Himself present with the Patriarchs and throughout all of the history of the Hebrews! Nor will He ever leave them nor forsake them (I Corinthians 10:1-4; Hebrews 13:5).*

***Genesis 32:24, 28.** *"Then Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day...So he said to him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Jacob' And he said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.'" There are no upper/lower cases in Hebrew, so "man" and "he" are not capitalized as they appear in many Christian Bibles. This Genesis passage says that Jacob struggled with a "man" (Heb: *ish*). The Hosea passage printed below calls the being an "angel" (*mal'akh*). But remember, *mal'akh* means "messenger" and need not always refer to a created heavenly being. Since verse 24 can be interpreted to mean that this particular struggle took place with God (*Elohim*), the Church has traditionally held that Jacob was here struggling with a pre-incarnate form of the God-Man Yeshua (Jesus)—a Messenger from the Father. "Israel" here means *"He struggles with God"*—while "Jacob" is related to struggle with man. The names are used interchangeably throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible—and Israel and his seed have continued to struggle, both with God and man. Yet when Jacob*

was allowed to “*prevail with God*” it was not on behalf of his old desires, but for the favor of sanctification which would change what he could not change himself. In using this incident as an aid to prayer for Israel today, we would encourage you to use the following related passage from Hosea 12:3-6:

“He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from him. He found him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us—that is, the LORD God of armies. YHVH is His memorable name. So you, by the help of your God, return; observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually.”

Genesis 33:18-19.** ***“And Jacob came safely (Hebrew: “whole”) to the city of Shechem...and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money.” As we mentioned a few weeks ago, those places where the Patriarchs and David purchased land tend to be centers of fierce spiritual contention to this day. From the rape of Dinah in the following chapter and the bloody massacre which follows, through the dreadful events of Judges 9, to King Rehoboam’s decision there to discipline his subjects “with scorpions” (I Kings 12:14 NASB), to the days of Hosea (Hosea 6:9: “As bands of robbers lie in wait for a man, so the company of priests murder on the way to Shechem; surely they commit lewdness”), the city of Shechem (modern-day Nablus) has long been associated with violence. In very recent years it has been a hot-bed for terrorism against Israel. Yet it is also the first place where Abraham is recorded as having stopped after arriving in Canaan (Genesis 12:6). The LORD (YHVH) appeared to him there and promised the land to his seed, “and there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.” It would be the location where Joseph’s bones would be brought and buried (Joshua 24:32); and where Yeshua Himself would have a meeting with a woman at a well Jacob had dug there (John 4). Presently it is a Palestinian city (Nablus) with several Jewish settlements nearby. In the early days of the 2nd *Intifada*, Jews were driven out of the site of Joseph’s Tomb, which was desecrated and burned. Almost certainly this city and the settlements will be a big issue in any proposed peace settlement in the future. **PLEASE PRAY: That the power of violence be broken over Shechem/Nablus—and its inhabitants brought into the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace. Pray that the altars of Abraham and Jacob to the LORD be restored there—and that the wells of living water that Yeshua spoke of there would spring up to Arab and Jew alike. Psalm 60:6 and 108:7 prophecy “God has spoken in His holiness; ‘I will exult, I will portion out Shechem . . .’”.**

Genesis 33:20.** ***“Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohei Yisrael.” We have found many names of God revealed thus far in Canaan—*El Elyon* (God Most High), *El Shaddai* (God Almighty), *El Roi* (The God who Sees), *Elohei-Avraham* (the Abraham-God). But this name...*Elohei-Yisrael*, the “Israel-God” is the one which will be used most hereafter. God Himself has chosen sovereignly to identify His name with Israel (Jacob) and his descendants. Muslims identify their deity with Ishmael, thus cutting themselves off from the Covenant which the Most High God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). He is the LORD (YHVH) God of Israel, and it is to Him that all of us, whatever our lineage must come. **PLEASE PRAY: grace for revelation and humility among both Jews and Muslims in Israel to bow to the one true God, who has Himself chosen to be identified with Israel (Jacob) and his seed.**

Genesis 35:2,5.** ***“And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments...And they

journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.”

Jacob came “in wholeness”—a new man with a new name, to Shechem (see Gen. 13:18-19 above)...but his “house” was not whole...there were hidden gods smuggled from Aram (perhaps brought originally by Abram’s father from Ur?), and obviously various other gods used as jewelry. The presence of these idols had caused a great breach in the protection of the family, occasioning violation (Dina), cruel and senseless violence (Shimon and Levi) and perhaps even eventually resulting in death (Rachel). For the “Family” of Israel to be made “whole”—for the family’s *armor* to be made sound, all of this had to be dealt with. Only God had been a shield for Abraham in this spiritually dark and violent land (Genesis 15:1)—and only the same God would be protection for Israel and his seed. The same holds true today. **PLEASE PRAY: For the conviction of the Holy Spirit in Israel to turn from idols and turn to the Living God for cleansing and clothing in righteousness. Pray especially for holiness in leadership in the Body of Messiah here—Clothed in that, the Terror of God will cause darkness to flee as they advance through the Land!**

***Genesis 36:12.** *“Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau’s son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau’s wife.”* Chapter 36 is dedicated to the genealogy of Esau, *“father of the Edomites”* (vs. 9). Central in that race would be the descendants of *Amalek*. As has been mentioned, Amalek in Scripture typifies a *Covenant-hating spirit which is the root of anti-Semitism*. It would be “Amalek” who would first attack Israel after she came forth out of the Red Sea (Exodus 17:8), and against whom God would swear continual war until he was blotted out from under heaven (17:14); it would be Amalek who would pick off stragglers in Israel’s rear when they were tired and weary (Deuteronomy 25:17-18). When Saul refused to follow God’s commandment and spared the Amalekite Agag (I Samuel 15:9), he would be severely rebuked by Samuel, lose his Kingship, and eventually according to one report, be killed by an Amalekite (II Samuel I:8, 13). And in the book of Esther, we see that the architect of a proposed Holocaust of the Jews in the Persian kingdom was Haman, the Agagite, a descendant of Amalek. **The Haftarah reading for this week is the Book of Obadiah**...a grim prophecy of judgment on Edom, “for violence against your brother Jacob.” God is not willing that any should perish. But He stands forever against that which opposes his covenant with Jacob/Israel—because that Covenant is ultimately a covenant of life for all Humankind. He cannot grant quarter to death, because he is *Elohim Haim*—the Life God! Because Islam claims that its god chose Ishmael (thereby choosing for itself a different covenant than the Life-Covenant which God gave through Isaac), the spirit behind that religion proves itself a Covenant-hating spirit, bringing all in its bondage under the judgment of the God of Life. God forever hates the power behind Esau/Edom/Amalek (Malachi 1:3; Obadiah 1:2, 18; Deuteronomy 25:19; Exodus 17:14-16)...but He loves those captured within that system; to those who will come out of that darkness, He offers life, hope and a future.



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (2-8 December: *VaYeshev*—“and [Jacob] dwelt”) will be: TORAH: Genesis 37:1—40:23; HAFTARAH: Amos 2:6—3:8]

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