

ISRAEL PRAYER UPDATE

Glory of Zion International Ministries



PARASHAH – VaYiggash



Hanukkah continues through Wednesday

PLEASE PRAY FOR U.S. VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL AND EGYPT THIS WEEK

This week U.S. Vice President Pence will be travelling to the Middle East. He is scheduled to arrive in Egypt on Tuesday, then to fly on to Israel Wednesday afternoon. His original plans included meeting with Palestinian leaders and a visit to Bethlehem—but in protest of President Trump’s recent public recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and his activation of procedures towards removal of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the Palestinian Authority has announced it will not meet with the Vice President.

While in Israel, Mr. Pence will meet with President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu; and he will visit the Western [“Wailing”] Wall. In a briefing last week to Israeli journalists on the Vice President’s upcoming trip, a White House representative mentioned Mr. Pence’s planned trip to the Wall, and added ***“the administration cannot conceive of a peace deal in which the Western Wall would not remain a part of Israel.”*** This last statement has infuriated Palestinians who, backed up by a *UNESCO* bill passed earlier in the year, claim the Western Wall and all areas captured by Israel in 1967 to be “occupied” Palestinian land.

While in Israel, Vice President Pence also will be addressing Israel’s seat of government, the Knesset. He will be the first senior US official to do so in nine years. In contrast with former President Obama, who turned down an invitation in favor of a meeting with university students, Mr. Pence has declared himself “humbled” by the opportunity to speak before the Israeli house of government. **We see Mr. Pence’s acknowledgment of “being humbled” as a special and promising sign.** Israel is not used to leaders and politicians coming to Jerusalem in humility. More often, they come with strong agendas, including demands regarding the Jewish State and the lands under its control. *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”*...this spiritual law most assuredly applies with regards to His covenant land and people Israel!

The Vice President arrives at a time of continued rumblings following President Trump’s declarations on Jerusalem. Most of those rumblings continue to be loudest outside of Israel. On Wednesday an emergency summit of Muslim and Arab nations in Istanbul declared East Jerusalem to be the capital of Palestine, and urged other nations to recognize a Palestinian state. Turkish President Recep Erdogan has vowed to establish a Turkish embassy in East Jerusalem. There have been massive demonstrations in Jordan and Pakistan. Today (Monday) the UN Security Council will vote on a bill “annuling” any declarations on Jerusalem such as that made by President Trump. In Israel itself, there has been little serious violence following Mr. Trump’s announcement—but there has been continual unrest in the contested territories—although much of it is obviously staged. A friend visiting Bethlehem witnessed such a demonstration—in which there were many more journalists than demonstrators. At the same time, violent demonstrations have been stirred in Gaza—and during the past week over a dozen rockets have been fired towards Israeli territory. Most of these are thought to be the responsibility of Islamic Jihad militants rather than Hamas, which controls the Strip. But their continuance is dangerous. Hamas has called for a new intifada against Israel, and the Palestinian Authority’s Fatah movement has called for staging “Day’s of Rage” throughout the Vice President’s visit.

Mr. Pence, whose personal Christian faith is well known had hoped as part of his visit to call attention to the plight of persecuted Christian minorities in the region. The persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt by the Muslim Brotherhood and in Libya by ISIS has had some exposure to the media—the intense persecution of Palestinian converts to Christianity in Judea, Samaria and Gaza has not. It is also rampant in Turkey...and only yesterday news came out of Iran of the raiding of six house churches an hour’s drive from Tehran, the four leaders dragged off by authorities. Yet, the Coptic church in Egypt has (under pressure?) announced that due to President Trump’s speech, it will not meet with the Vice President. Nor, as mentioned, will the Palestinians.

We believe this visit by Vice President Pence to be ordained by God, and that it is important that he be surrounded with prayer during his journey to Egypt and Israel this week.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * God's blessing over the Vice President throughout the trip, that he will know God's agenda and walk in it. That Mr. Pence will intrust himself to the counsels of the LORD and the thoughts of His heart. (Psalm 33:11).
- * That during this trip, Mr. Pence will not only be taken into Israel's confidence—but will be granted *God's* confidence regarding Israel. Psalm 25:12,14 promises the man who walks in the fear of the Lord, that he will be granted guidance in making choices, access to the secrets of the Lord. And as he waits on the Lord, integrity and unwaveringness will preserve him (vs. 21).
- * That God would guard the Vice President and his family. That he would be protected physically, emotionally and spiritually throughout the trip. That his mind would be protected with God's *shalom* (Philippians 4:7). *Pray that God will guard his mind and tongue from any traps or snares laid by the enemy* (Psalm 91:3; Proverbs 15:2; 16:1).
- * That there be sound bonds of friendship formed between the Vice President and the Israeli leaders. And a deepening love and understanding of Israel by Mr. Pence.
- * That God would grant grace, wisdom and counsel in his conversations with President Sisi in Egypt.
- * That angels will be released to guard Israel's peace during the Vice President's visit—that demonic powers would not be allowed to incite violence in Jeruslaem and Israel during his visit.

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 17-23 December 2017 are called *VaYiggash*— “And He [i.e. Judah] Drew Near”:

TORAH: Genesis 44:18—47:27

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 37:15-28

***Genesis 44:18; 46:28.** *“Then he [Judah] drew near to him [Joseph]...”* There is no question that the story of Joseph and his brothers provides a prophetic picture of Yeshua/Jesus and His “own” (i.e. the Hebrew people) who rejected Him—but to whom He will one day be revealed as “risen from the dead” to provide salvation. He continues to love them with an everlasting love and to “draw” them with loving kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). In His grace, many are already “drawing near” to God, confessing their sin and inadequacy as did the brothers. At the close of last week’s Portion Judah confessed: **“What shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak? How can we make ourselves righteous? God has brought out the iniquity of your servants!”** As they draw near, Yeshua, like Joseph, miraculously reveals Himself to them! (Zechariah 2:9, 11) And this picture of His kindness, His salvation for Israel is itself a portrait of the same love and righteousness He offers on behalf of all humankind!

PLEASE PRAY: for more and more in Israel to be led in God’s kindness to repentance and to respond to His call to “draw near.”

***Genesis 44:20, 30-34.** *“We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’... ‘Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.”*

Twenty-two years earlier, the jealousy and hatred in their hearts towards Joseph had calloused the hearts of the brothers towards their father’s feelings to the extent that they greatly dishonored Jacob when they abused the son he loved. “It is the Lord’s mercies which lead us to repentance.” We see now how a genuine respectful, familial tenderness has at last been awakened towards the feelings of their Father. Malachi 4:5-6 tells of a day when God’s prophetic word will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, before the coming of the “great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

***Genesis 46:28.** *“Then he (Jacob) sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen.”* Beginning in Chapter 43 and more strongly emphasized here, the mantle of leadership shifts from Reuben to Judah. From here on, a special precedence will be given to this tribe— **“Judah goes first”!** From Jacob’s blessing regarding a scepter of royalty (Gen. 49:8); to leadership of the armies marching towards Canaan (Numbers 10:14); to the securing of the land in the time of the Judges (Judges 1:2), to the Kingship of David; to the birth of the Messiah in the City of David; to Zechariah’s prophecy of the Last Days when *“The LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem”* but *“will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah”* (Zechariah 2:12; 12:7)—God has chosen that this tribe shall lead (See also I Chronicles 5:2).

There is much of significance which may be drawn from this...but perhaps the most immediate point would be related to the name itself, **Yehudah** (Judah), given by Leah at his birth (Genesis 29:35). The word means *“Thankful praise expressed by the raising of the hands”*.

PLEASE PRAY: for a fresh awakening of thanksgiving and praise amongst the Body in Israel, with an awareness that this must come first (II Chron. 20:21-22). It is such thankful praise which will lead Israel into victories and into the true place of her inheritance in Messiah. Pray that the Lord will indeed “*take possession of praise*” in the Holy Land (Zechariah 2:12), that it will be released to His glory in Spirit and in Truth.

***Ezekiel 37:21-23.** *“Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will purify them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”*

PLEASE PRAY: that the Spirit who ‘convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment’ would be poured out on Israel in increasing measure, bringing her to a place where God can reveal the Purification which has been prepared for her—so that Israel may indeed dwell in his land of covenant forever (vs. 25).

***Ezekiel 37:21-22.** *“I will...bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again” (Emphases ours).*

It is plain that God still sees the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s seed forever as being “their own land.” The “mountains of Israel” refers to Judea and Samaria, that same area currently labelled the “West Bank” and slated by much of the world to be split off, forming “two nations side by side” each with its own leader. From these two verses, it is clear that such a “two–state” solution made up of two nations and with two different leaders is not, nor will ever be God’s plan. Only He can bring divided Israel back and make them *one nation* in this same section of His land in which the promises in Shechem, Bethel and Hebron were made. Hence, the huge warfare already raging and which will continue until Israel comes into relation with her God, the final battle is won, and God’s Kingdom is established there (Ezekiel 38-39).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s kingdom come in the returning Children of Israel and in the Mountains of Israel—Judea, Jerusalem and Samaria. Pray for a renewed sense of stewardship of Jews in Israel regarding all which God says is “their own land”—and an awareness of Who must be trusted to bring it to pass if it is never to be divided into two kingdoms again.

***Ezekiel 37:24-25.** *“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd...My servant David shall be their prince forever.”*

Evangelical Christianity often sees this “David” as Yeshua/Jesus, the spiritual and physical descendant of the David anointed by Samuel. And there is no question that Yeshua will certainly reign from His throne in Jerusalem (Psalm 2) as King of Kings. As verse 28 here states, “*the nations also will know that I, YHVH, make Israel holy, when my holy place is in their midst forevermore.*”

Yet Hebrew tradition (and one borne out by the language of the Hebrew in the text), assumes that this particular passage in Ezekiel refers to a resurrected David, the “shepherd king” son of Jesse. (It is of interest that the “Prince” who begins to be mentioned in Ezekiel 45:7 and who ministers in the midst of the mysterious Temple described there is designated with the same Hebrew word *nasi* as the word for “prince” here. David’s often stated desire was that he might “dwell in the house of the YHVH forever.”).

PLEASE PRAY: That God’s government come into place in this land. Both in the near and in the distant future, may *His* Kingdom Come!



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[The readings for next week (24-30 December 2017) are called *VaYechi*— “*And He* [i.e. Jacob] *Lived*”. TORAH: Genesis 47:28—50:26; HAFTARAH: I Kings 2:1-12.]

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