

Prayer Update From Israel (December 3, 2012)



*Rainbow over Mount of Olives, Mount Zion and Temple Mount in Jerusalem
November 2012*

1. THE PASSAGE OF UN RESOLUTION 67/19

As most of you will have heard, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly last Thursday afternoon to pass *Resolution 67/19*, recognizing the Biblical heartland of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and East Jerusalem as a non-member observer Palestinian “state”. 138 nations voted in favor, 41 abstained; only nine nations—**Israel, the United States, Canada, the Czech Republic, Panama, and the Pacific Island-states of Palau, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia**—cast their votes against the proposition. The next day Israel responded to the vote by granting approval of 3,000 new housing units in east Jerusalem and the West Bank; in particular to begin drawing up plans for settling Jews in the corridor separating Jerusalem from Ma’ale Adummim, a thriving Jewish community a few miles east of the capital about which Israel has long voiced a desire that it eventually become connected to the city. **On Sunday the Israeli cabinet on Sunday unanimously passed a resolution rejecting the UN decision**, declaring further that it will not serve as a basis for future negotiations. Prime Minister Netanyahu described President Abbas’s speech at the UN as ‘hostile, poisonous’ and filled with “false propaganda”, and on Sunday vowed that ***“Israel will not allow Judea and Samaria to become a terror base from which rockets will be launched into Israeli towns. There will be no Palestinian State until Israel is recognized as a Jewish State, alongside a resolution to end the conflict.”*** Later that day P.A. President Abbas delivered a victory speech in Ramallah, in which he said, ***“We went to New York taking to the world a dream...We have a state now...One day, a young Palestinian will raise the Palestinian flag over Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the state of Palestine.”***

Of course, we are saddened and sobered by the results of the vote. We believe a line has been crossed. We fear for the repercussions which choices made last Thursday may have upon the nations involved. We strongly suspect that the governmental decisions made on that date have sounded within the heavenlies, that what things they may have set in motion are momentous and grave beyond our natural powers to presently understand.

But it is not a time to be dismayed. As believers we are to “gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, resting our hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.” (I Peter 1:13). This week we have found ourselves especially aware of a Word in **Daniel**, fulfilled to a measure during the time of the Maccabean wars (see below) when Jewish believers in these same territories were faced with challenges in some ways not un-similar to those developing today: ***“But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out exploits (Hebrew: “Do!”). And those of the people who have understanding (i.e. are able to reason with integrity) shall instruct many...And some of those having this “understanding” gift shall fall—to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time” (Daniel 11:32-35).***

We are grateful for those nations which stood with us during the vote. We pray for God’s mercy and grace to be strengthened to do so in the future. We would encourage those of you whose nations voted in favor of the resolution or chose to abstain, that we see the passage above as applying also to you. We pray light and guidance and courage for you as you continue to bless Israel and to stand for the redemptive purposes that God has for your nations—even in the “evil day.”

PLEASE PRAY:

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

***For Believers in Israel and in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza to be strengthened with courage, vision, and understanding (Daniel 11:34-35 above).**

***That God’s Kingdom advance quickly in Israel at this time, that evangelism awaken and discipleship rise up amongst Jews and Arabs while there is still time.**

***Psalm 2 and Zechariah 1:14-17; 2:5 over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.**

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

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

Zechariah 2:12-13. *“And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Hush! All flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!”

2. HANUKKAH BEGINS SATURDAY EVENING

***Hanukkah* is A Hebrew word meaning “dedication.” (It is used, for instance, in II Chron. 7:9 when Solomon dedicated the altar for the First Temple.) The eight-day Jewish celebration bearing that name (it is also called the *Festival of Lights*) remembers the re-dedication of the “second” temple in Jerusalem after it had been recovered by the Jewish forces of Yehuda Maccabee in 164 BC. The Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a forerunner of the Anti-Christ, foretold in Daniel 11:21), seeking to coerce Jews into abandoning their religion and culture for that of Greece, had issued edicts forbidding circumcision, observance of Jewish Sabbaths and feast-days. He had defiled the Holy Temple by offering a sow on the altar and raising up in the Sanctuary a statue to Zeus. As depicted in the *First Book of Maccabees* (a respected historical account of Jewish history found in the Apocrypha), a revolt was launched by the priest Mattathias and later led by his son Yehuda (Judas) Maccabee. It led to the defeat of the Syrian forces, after which the defiled Temple was cleansed and re-dedicated. Another account relates how during this cleansing there was only enough sanctified oil left to burn in the**

menorah for one night—yet a miracle occurred and it continued burning for eight days. The victorious warrior Yehuda ordained *“that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Kislev, with mirth and gladness”* (I Maccabees 4:59).

John records how Yeshua/Jesus was walking in the Temple on Solomon’s Porch during the Festival of Hanukkah in Jerusalem (John 10:22). It was during this season that he chose to speak of himself as *“The Good Shepherd”* who *“lays down his life for the sheep.”* And, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one”* (John 10:27-30 ESV).

Today, part of the celebration includes the use of a special eight-branched menorah upon which a new oil lamp or candle is lit each evening. Each light is ignited from the flame of a separate “branch” called *shamash*—“servant”. Remarkably, the Haftarah reading for this Saturday within Hanukkah, besides containing, as might be expected, a menorah (see Torah section below), also includes the following words, *“Behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.”* Although a different word for servant is used here, there is no doubt that it refers to the Servant-Messiah, sent by the Father—the Light Inextinguishable, who illumines all coming into the world (John 1:9).

*Hanukkah—the Feast of Dedication—the Festival of Lights
is a season for*

*Allowing the Holy Light of the Spirit to shine within ourselves, revealing any idolatry or uncleanness which may have defiled our bodies (which are the Temple of the Holy Spirit) and removing it. Of re-dedicating our bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

*Dedicating our ears to listen for the voice of our Shepherd (John 10 above).

*For surrendering ourselves anew to the infilling of the Holy Spirit whose anointing comes from an inexhaustible supply.

*For letting our “lights” shine brightly in the darkness—reaching out and joining with those of other believers. A popular Israeli Hebrew Children’s song for Hanukkah is called *Banu Hoshekh L’garesh* (“We have come to drive out darkness”):

*We have come to drive out darkness, in our hands light and fire:
Each of us is a small light, but together we are a strong, steady light.
Flee Darkness in the Blackness—Flee before the Light!*

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 2-8 December are called *VaYeshev*—“And [Jacob] Dwelt”

TORAH: Genesis 37:1—40:23

HAFTARAH : Amos 2:6—3:8

This week we begin the story of Joseph and his brothers

***Genesis 37:11.** *“His brothers were jealous of him [Joseph’s prophetic dream], but his father kept the matter in mind”* (NKJV). A more literal rendering of the Hebrew might be: *“but his father guarded the word.”* As the Lord returns to Zion with deliverance and an outpouring of His Spirit, PLEASE PRAY for mature instruction in the prophetic among Israelis—when and how to share prophecies and dreams; how to “guard” and save a Word of the LORD until its time comes to fruition; also how to guard against giving place to the flesh which can awaken jealousies towards those more gifted in certain areas than we are.

***Genesis 39:8-9.** *“But he refused [his master’s wife’s seductive advances] and said, ‘Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house...he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?’* PLEASE PRAY for clean minds and hearts and the Fear of the Lord in believing Israeli youth who are under constant temptation to compromise their integrity and sexual purity. Revelation 14 speaks of 144,000 who will not have defiled themselves. Perhaps there are some of that army already alive in the land! If so, of course the evil one will do all he can to divert them from their destiny. Pray for a new wave of bold and victorious ones governed by godly integrity—who would like Joseph have hatred of the very thought of sinning against their neighbor and their God.

***Genesis 40:8.** *“And they said to him, ‘We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.’ So Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.’”* Joseph’s rhetorical question is answered centuries later by another godly young Hebrew captive, Daniel, *“But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets...”* (Daniel 2:28).

***Amos 2:6.** *“Thus says YHVH, ‘For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver...’”* This is the usual reason given for the choice of this passage as the week’s *Haftarah*, the connection being the selling of the righteous Joseph by his brothers to Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver (Genesis 37:28). Yet in a strange way, the following verses also make a connection: *“A man and his father go in to the same girl, to defile My holy name. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge...”* Genesis 38 relates how a most *un*-righteous Judah would (unknowingly) go in to the same woman as had his eldest son...leaving a signet, cord and staff as pledge. In this story we see many ways in which the righteous Joseph prefigures Yeshua, the Messiah. Here he remains pure in the face of temptation, even though it will mean suffering. On the other hand, Judah, through whose seed the Messiah will someday come, is immediately seen as one enslaved to desires of his fallen human nature. God would work sovereignly through even his sinful failures (Judah would, in fact, later acknowledge his unrighteousness—38:26; 44:16), to guard the passage of the seed He had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bless. Over 800 years later, a blessing over Naomi (Ruth 4:12), would be *“May your*

house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this [Ruth] young woman!” That “offspring” would eventuate in David the King...and finally Yeshua, the Hebrew Messiah and Savior of the World.

***Amos 2:11-12; 3:7-8.** “*I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?’ Says the LORD...Surely the Lord YHVH does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to his servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?*”

PLEASE PRAY for the raising up sons and daughters in Israel who move confidently and soundly in the prophetic giftings. Pray for the restoration of the office of “Prophet” in the Land. Satan hates this—because the spirit of prophecy involves “*the testimony of Yeshua*” (Revelation 19:10b), and so much of Israel is still behind a veil regarding their Messiah. It is this gift and office which bring clarity, understanding, instruction and encouragement to the Body regarding “*what the Spirit is saying to the congregations.*”



*Martin & Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (9-15 December: *Miketz*—“at the end [of two full years]”) will be: TORAH: Genesis 41:1—44:17; HAFTARAT-HANUKKAH: Zechariah 2:10—4:7]

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**.