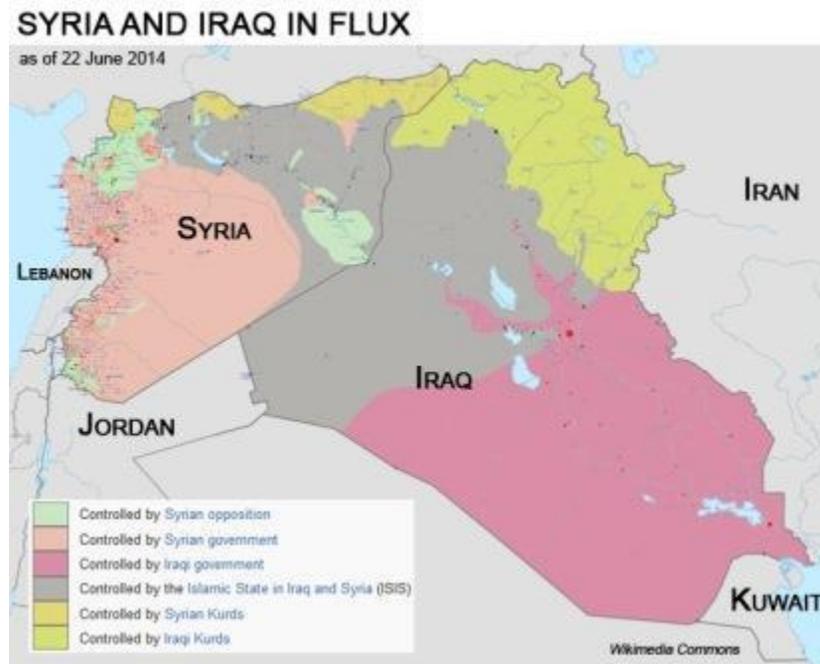


Prayer Update From Israel (June 30, 2014)



Two weeks ago in the June 16th Update we wrote, *“The landscape is changing quickly in the Middle East—spiritually, demographically, perhaps soon to be geographically as well.”* The following day, during a watch at *Succat Hallel* in Jerusalem devoted to intercession over the “Isaiah 19 Highway,” our friend Rick Ridings received a vision regarding the shifting of boundaries in the Middle East. We find the elements of this vision to be of critical importance and submit it with Rick’s analysis for your prayerful consideration below. Certain aspects of that vision appear already to be moving into place:

ISIS

*During the past twenty-four hours the “Islamic State in Syria and Iraq” (ISIS, or alternately, the “Islamic State in Syria and the Levant”) has declared itself a new “Islamic Caliphate”, its territory (for the present) extending from Northern Syria to the Iraqi province of Diyala, just north of Baghdad. The group furthermore declares itself to be dropping “Syria,” “Iraq,” or “Levant” from its name, to be henceforth known only as the “Islamic State” or “Caliphate”. Its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is to be the new “Caliph”—a name applied to a chief Muslim civil and religious ruler, one considered the only legitimate successor to the Prophet Mohammed. (There has not been a generally-accepted “Caliph” since the Ottoman Empire. A caliph ruled in Baghdad until 1258, then in Egypt until the conquest of the Ottomans in 1517. The title was then held by the Ottoman sultans until it was abolished by Ataturk in 1924 (Oxford Dictionary of English).) In rhetoric reminiscent of Shelley’s *Ozymandias*, an official declaration released yesterday by a spokesperson for the new “caliphate” reads, **“The legality of all emirates, groups, states and organizations becomes null by the expansion of the caliph’s authority and the arrival of its troops to their areas. Listen to your caliph and obey him! Support your state, which grows every day.”***

This brazen “establishment” has, of course, enormous ideological and theological implications throughout Islam. How powerful may be its challenge from opposing Sunni Jihadist organizations such as *al-Qa’ida* remains to be seen—but none of these factions have been able to bring about anything like the remarkable territorial gains made by ISIS during the past weeks.

JORDAN

The week saw signs of Israeli cooperation with Jordan, should the Kingdom come under threat from the new realities in Iraq. On Wednesday, *ynetnews* quoted a source in the Jordanian Embassy in Israel, “*There is a very good cooperation between us regarding ISIS’ growing presence in Iraq and Syria, but also on issues relating to other radical forces in the Middle East which have their sights set on Israel and Jordan*” (“Jordan, Israel cooperate in face of ISIS threat”: *ynetnews.com*, 25 June 2014 00:12).

KURDS

Meanwhile, the Kurds (about whom we wrote last week), appear indeed headed towards statehood. In an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour last Monday, Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani hinted that it might not be far away, “*Iraq is obviously falling apart. And it’s obvious that the federal or central government has lost control over everything. Everything is collapsing—the army, the troops, the police. We did not cause the collapse of Iraq. It is others who did. And we cannot remain hostages for the unknown...the time is here for the Kurdistan people to determine their future and the decision of the people is what we are going to uphold*” (“[EXCLUSIVE: Iraqi Kurdistan leader Massoud Barzani says 'the time is here' for self-determination](#)”: *CNN.com*, 23 June, 2014 11:55 AM ET). A meeting in Iraq the following day between Barzani and US Sec. of State Kerry, in which Kerry sought to persuade the leader against separating from the Iraqi state, appears to have had little effect.

This week also saw notice being taken of the silence of Turkey at the recent Kurdish takeover of Kirkuk, something which would have been unthinkable even a month ago. But since then, ISIS, one of the insurgents supported by Turkey against Syria’s Assad, has captured over 80 Turkish citizens and brought all cross-border trade between south-eastern Turkey and Syria to a halt. Analysts suspect that Turkey’s silence at the Kurdish gains may signal that they now see the Iraqi Kurds as “the only reliable partners in a country on the edge of a new civil war between Sunnis and Shiites” (“After Opening Way to Rebels, Turkey is Paying Heavy Price”: *NYTimes.com*, 24 June 2014).

In Israel on Sunday, PM Netanyahu essentially endorsed Kurdish independence: “With respect to the Kurds, they are a warrior nation that is politically moderate, has proven they can be politically committed, and is worthy of statehood.”

**Re-Drawing the Middle East Map
By Rick Ridings**

<http://www.succathallel.com>

On June 17th, I had a vision in Succat Hallel of a new season in the Middle East defined by the re-drawing of its borders. I saw angels being released who had sashes over their shoulders on which were written the phrase “Border angel”. They were being sent forth to reset borders according to their original ethnic calling.

In the Scriptures, the word “nations” is not used in our modern sense of “nation states” but more in the sense of “peoples” or “ethnic groups”. Many of the crises facing the Middle East can be traced to the colonial powers’ decision to re-draw the map of the Middle East (also in Africa) as modern nation states, putting warring tribal and religious groupings in the same nation state, and dividing united tribal or religious groups into different nation states. (1, 2, 3)

In Deuteronomy 32:8,9 it states that “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided up all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance” (NIV). Isaiah 19 describes a future messianic federation where Egypt, Assyria (the area of that ancient empire includes most of the Middle East), and Israel are joined together in His worship, “...a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed saying, ‘Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.’” (NASB)

An altar among the Kurds

In the vision I received, I saw these “border angels” going forth in a focused way to the Kurdish autonomous area of present-day Iraq. They started pulling on and protecting borders. I saw an altar of prayer and worship to the Lord in the heart of this Kurdish region, where more and more stones were being added to it, causing the altar to be raised up higher and higher.

Next, I saw bulldozers and cranes carving a deep pool in this Kurdish region. I felt this was a reservoir being created to hold waters of the Holy Spirit.

A gallows for Haman

Then the vision shifted to the predominantly Sunni region of Iraq, much of which had just recently been taken over by the extremist group commonly referred to as ISIS (short for “Islamic State of Iraq and greater Syria”). Their Arabic name refers to “al-Sham” and refers to their goal to see a restored Islamic state, or caliphate, not only in the Sunni areas of Iraq, but in the entire region “stretching from southern Turkey through Syria to Egypt (also including Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan.” (4) According to news reports, the ISIS terrorist army is seriously considering invading Jordan next, and the “slaughter” of King Abdullah. (5)

In the vision I saw, however, this Sunni “nation” was allowed a more restrained border that would take in certain areas of present-day Iraq and Syria. I saw a wall going up on the eastern border of Jordan, which was keeping ISIS from over-running Jordan. Then I saw the barbaric leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, building a gallows like Haman. My sense in the vision was that the Lord would allow the “ISIS” group to control a certain area for an allotted time, but that they would do such extreme things that they would be building their own gallows, and that a

generation of young people would arise in that area who would become disgusted with fundamentalist Islam and become open to Jesus.

As things went from worse to worse in the ISIS-controlled areas of present-day Iraq and Syria, I saw in the vision that the Kurdish region was protected and that the rains of the Holy Spirit began to fall upon their area and started filling their “pool” with the water of Life.

'Sushan is mine'

Next in the vision, I saw a “Tower of Babel” (which I knew represented a nuclear program) being built in Iran. The Lord sent a distraction, and someone came and whispered in the ear of the leader. He then said to those around him that he needed to change his focus for now and go to Baghdad to try to stop what might happen there.

Then a voice in the vision said: “Sushan is mine”. Interestingly, ancient Sushan, where Queen Esther and Mordecai lived, is now in the western part of present-day Iran. I then saw the blood of Jesus being poured around borders of ancient Sushan in western Iran. I felt it was being targeted for a strong move of the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus.

Then in the vision I saw the huge fires in Syria start to die down and turn to smoldering ashes. Out of the ashes I saw seedlings arising, which I knew represented a move of the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to youth & children.

Next I saw the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing upon the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. As the wind grew stronger, so did the shakings.

Finally, in the vision I saw the “pool” of the work of the Holy Spirit amongst the Kurdish people filled to overflowing and to begin to spill over its borders to the neighboring peoples.

Prayer points

Pray for rains of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the Kurdish people during this window of opportunity. About 18 months ago, one of our Succat Hallel leaders, Gary K., had a strong moment when he felt the Holy Spirit whispered to him: “Springtime for the Kurds”. He felt this was not the counterfeit Islamic “springtime” but that we were to pray for the birthing of a real move of God among the Kurdish people. Just after that, he boarded a Norwegian Airways plane, and the magazine cover said “Springtime for the Kurds”!

1. As part of the preparation for the rains, **pray blessing and protection over the two houses of prayer** we relate to in the Kurdish area of present-day Iraq. Pray for the increased interest in prayer in the Kurdish churches to grow into a movement. Pray that the Kurdish government will continue and increase its alignment with Israel, resulting in blessing upon the Kurdish people. (6, 7)
2. **Pray protection, grace, and provision for the present Christian believers in these countries, many of who are experiencing great persecution** (especially in the region around Mosul, Iraq recently taken over by ISIS). (8)

3. **Pray that the “ISIS” group will go too far and expose the true, violent face of fundamentalist Islam.** Pray that their leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, will build his own gallows and be exposed as was Haman of old. Pray for a generation to quickly arise who will become disgusted with Islam because of ISIS and who will turn to the Lord in large numbers, as happened a few years ago in Algeria.
4. **Proclaim Psalm 72 over this region** and that Jesus the Messiah is the One who will “have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River [Euphrates] to the ends of the earth.” (Ps. 72:8 AMP)

Action point

There are Christians in Syria and Iraq fleeing from the Muslim extremists who need aid. If you would like to help our brothers and sisters in this region, visit BarnabasFund.org to give.

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2. ELAV (English: “Unto Him”) CONFERENCE BEGINS SATURDAY NIGHT.

Please continue to pray the prayer points from last week for the conference of Jewish and Arab young people from the region which takes place this coming Saturday evening through Monday evening. We *Praise the Lord* that 12 of the 14 Jordanian young people (six men and six women) for whom we prayed were granted visas to come into Israel to attend the conference! We are also grateful that necessary **funds for the conference continue to come in.** As mentioned last week, **if you or your congregation would like to have a part financially in this vital work among Israel’s young, you may find information on how to contribute at** <http://elav.succathallel.com/donate/>

THIS WEEKEND'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 reading for this week 29 June—5 July is called *Balak*:

TORAH: Numbers 22:2—25:9

HAFTARAH: Micah 5:7—6:8

This week's Portion focuses upon the story of the pagan prophet Balaam (Hebrew pronunciation: Bil'am), called from his homeland in the Euphrates area by the Moabite king Balak to come and curse Israel, at this time spread out on the plain just across the Jordan from Jericho. But Israel's God is in charge of the vocal chords of Balaam, and the intended curses pour forth as blessing, the oracles being amongst the most magnificent examples of Hebrew poetry in the Hebrew Bible.

WE FIND THESE PASSAGES PARTICULARLY PERTINENT FOR OUR DAY.

THE EVENTS IN BOTH THIS AND LAST WEEK'S PARASHA TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE REGIONS OF IRAQ AND JORDAN ADDRESSED EARLIER IN THIS UPDATE.

***Numbers 22:8.** *“And he [i.e. Balaam] said to them, ‘Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD [YHVH] speaks to me.’”* This as well as vs 18 (“YHVH my God”) might suggest that Balaam was a worshipper of the LORD. However, Joshua 13:22 describes him as a “soothsayer”—an occult occupation strongly condemned in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. As such, it is more likely that he wished to present himself to Balak as an ‘expert’ on all Gods, including YHVH the God of Israel. It is interesting that in the Deity's dealing with Balaam in 22:9, 12, 20, 22 the term “God” rather than “YHVH” is used, as would have likely have been the case had he been a follower of the LORD of Israel. Although God speaks to Balaam, and in fact takes over his mouth to speak *through* him, it is obvious from later allusions in the New Testament (II Peter 2:15-17, Jude 11, Revelation 2:14) that his heart was divided—he *“loved the wages of unrighteousness”* (II Peter 2:15-17); he *“ran greedily into error for profit”* (Jude 11)—and, after the failure of his attempts to curse Israel by his magic arts (Numbers 24:1),

he later “*taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality*” (Numbers 25:2; Revelation 2:14). For such he was eventually slain (Joshua 13:22)—and believers in the Church age are warned against falling into his evil ways.

***Numbers 22:20.** “*...only the word which I speak to you shall you do.*” In the Hebrew, this is not a command but rather a simple statement of fact—“This is what is *going* to take place”. **PLEASE PRAY:** that God’s living, creative Word be released in Israel. It comes best through His willing servants—but He is Lord, and as such exercises sovereignty over the lips of all humankind (and even the beasts). **Pray** for spiritual discernment among the Body in Israel—to recognize *His* Word, to discern “*between the righteous and the wicked— between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him*” (Malachi 3:18).

***Numbers 22:22.** “*But Elohim was angry because he [Balaam] was going, and the messenger/angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary [Literal Hebrew: as a satan] against him.*” The Hebrew word “*satan*” originally meant “one who is an adversary”. In this case, the adversary was good— “The Angel of the LORD”. In Zechariah 3:1-2, “*The Satan*” standing to accuse Joshua the high priest was evil. “*Against whom one stands*” as adversary is the issue. Better that the LORD’s adversaries be also ours and His angel standing with us against them, than that the Holy One *Himself* come to be revealed as adversary against us!

***Numbers 22:31.** “*Then the LORD opened [Hebrew: revealed] Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.*” **PLEASE PRAY:** that God will open the eyes of those who are allowing themselves to be spokespersons to the church in the nations regarding Israel, albeit with impure motives—that they will see that they are playing with fire. Pray that the eyes of the hearts of Israeli believers be opened to see into the heavenlies, where we are seated with Messiah. Pray that we will flow *with* God’s heavenly armies rather than contrary to them (Ephesians 1:3,18-21; II Kings 6:16-17).

***Numbers 23:3b.** “*So he went to a desolate height...*” This is exactly the same word (only in the singular) used in Isaiah 41:8, “*I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys.*” What God was about to release through Balaam was a torrent of prophetic truth which would stream through the centuries, and which is still nourishing Israel today!

***Numbers 23:9.** “*...Behold, a people who dwells apart, and will not be reckoned as being among the nations.*” **PLEASE PRAY:** that modern Israel would rise up to her place of calling—that God would wean us away from the habitual longing to be “like other nations.” Pray for believing brothers and sisters in the Nations to release Israel to “be set apart” to what God has called her to be.

***Numbers 23:21.** “*He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The LORD his God is with him, and the shout [or royal shofar blast] of a King is among them.*” **PLEASE PRAY:** “*Your Kingdom come, Your will be done—in Israel—as it is in Heaven!*”

***Numbers 24:7, 20.** *“His [i.e. Jacob’s] King shall be higher than Agag, and His kingdom shall be exalted...Amalek was first among the nations, but shall be last until he perishes.”* As we have mentioned during our traversals of Exodus 17:8-16 and Deut 25:17-19, *Amalek* signifies a covenant-hating spirit which has historically manifested in seeking to destroy God’s covenant-people Israel; this spirit is at the heart of all anti-Semitism. *Agag* was an Amalekite king (I Samuel 15:8) and *Haman*, the “Enemy of the Jews”, who sought to exterminate them out of the Persian Empire, was a descendant of *Agag* (Esther 3:1, 10). God’s covenants with Israel are covenants of Life, through which flows blessing for all humankind made in His image. Therefore, He has sworn war with *Amalek* from generation to generation until He has utterly blotted out his memory from under Heaven (Exodus 17:14-15). “His King”—(His Son, Psalm 2:6-7) *“was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:14).

***Numbers 23:23.** *“For there is no sorcery [In Hebrew, the word used here for “sorcery” and that used for “serpent” are identical] in Jacob and no magic in Israel. It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘Oh, what God has done!’”*

***Micah 5:12.** *“I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your obelisks from your midst; You shall no more worship the work of your hands.*

Both this passage from the Torah and that from the Haftarah are very pertinent for us in Israel today. The enemy knows that his time is short—and he has sown sorcery throughout the land. In secular schools, children are often taught the horoscope and New Age in the early grades (we have seen the homework papers ourselves). Much of ultra-Orthodox Judaism is permeated with the occult. Often Israelis flocking to Asia (particularly India and Thailand) after military service, bring back Eastern mysticism to fill the void within. And there are New Age festivals several times a year which attract thousands. **Please Pray:** that the works of the serpent will be exposed and cut off in Israel. Pray for release of signs and wonders and deliverance from demons in the Name of Yeshua through the power of the *Holy Spirit*. **Pray** that curses made against this Land and people from outside will hit a wall and fall to the ground. **Pray** for God to raise up leaders like Josiah who will work with holy Zeal and Jealousy for the cleansing of our land.

***Micah 6:8:** *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the YHVH require of you but to do justly, to love lovingkindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* PLEASE PRAY this verse from over Israel—God *“resists the proud but gives grace to the humble”*, and He longs to “walk” with her again!



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 6-12 July 2014 is called *Pinchas*—
“Phinehas”: TORAH: Numbers 25:10—29:40; HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:46—19:21]**

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