

Prayer Update From Israel (August 27, 2012)



1. THE CIRCUMCISION BAN AND A RISING STORM OVER THE INHERITANCE OF ISAAC.

“All the LORD’s paths are lovingkindness and truth to those who guard His covenant and His testimony” (Psalm 25:10).

Last week a rabbi in northern Bavaria became the first *mohel* (a Jewish person trained in the procedure) to have criminal charges brought against him for administering *brit milah*—the Hebrew Covenant of Circumcision. This followed the June 26 ruling of a Cologne court that circumcision for religious reasons constitutes illegal bodily harm to infants. Opponents say that it violates bodily integrity of the child and should not be allowed until the boy is 14 and can choose for himself whether he wants to go through with it (the Biblical directive for male Hebrew children is the eighth day after birth). Although this is the first time such a law has resulted in charges being filed, similar legislations have begun to be proposed and in some cases passed in other parts of Europe. Nor is the US exempt—only last year a petition in San Francisco raised 12,000 signatures to have a ban placed on the fall ballot reportedly calling for \$1000 fine and/or a year in prison for circumcising males beneath the age of 18. A week following the San Francisco action, a San Diego group proposed to ballot a circumcision ban in Santa Monica as well. In the event, a lawsuit brought by San Francisco’s Jewish Community Relations Council was required to strike the measure from the November ballot (See: “Male circumcision ban proposed in Santa Monica”; JPOST.COM Staff, 05/25/2011 13:32; and “Israel faces a cynical world”, by Caroline B. Glick, Column One, *The Jerusalem Post* 24 Aug 2012, p.24).

The case last week has raised a storm of protest in Jewish circles in Germany, in Israel and around the world. It has also wrought much confusion in legal systems affected. German officials this week brought in Israeli Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger to assist them in attempting to work out some manner of legal protection for Jews and Muslims in that nation who circumcise their children. Activists have suggested a number of alternatives, such as that a sort of “symbolic” ritual be developed to replace the actual cutting of the infant. Rabbi Metzger’s response to such suggestions rings in a

way which must find resonance back through four millennia of his ancestors, ***“This is our belief, and this is the root of the Jewish soul. It is a stamp, a seal on the body of a Jew.”*** (“Accord Sought in Germany Over Circumcision Issue”: *New York Times*, 21 Aug 2012).

It is critical to realize that the issue beginning to surface is something far more serious than the civil rights of children or even of religious groups. We are talking about human interference with *Covenant*—covenant initiated and cut by and with *Elohim-Chaim*—the “God of all Life”. Cloaking itself in a ‘humanitarian’ mask, a great and evil power is beginning to make its move, and evil which hates God and despises all humankind made in His image. A *covenant-hating* spiritual system, it abhors especially those covenants cut with the Hebrew Fathers, covenants still in effect whose validation issues forth in life for all humanity.

LET US EXAMINE BRIEFLY SOME SCRIPTURES WHICH RELATE TO THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION AND WHY IT REMAINS OF ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE TODAY

Genesis 12:6-7: The LORD (YHVH) brings Abram into a promised Land. When he first arrives at Shechem (site of modern-day Nablus), YHVH appears to Abram and promises that *He will give this land to his seed*. Abram responds by building an altar there to the God “who had appeared to him”, first in Ur, now in Canaan.

Genesis 13:14: From a point near Bethel the LORD has Abram look in all four directions and promises all the land which he can see, to give it to him and to his seed *forever*.

Genesis 15:9-21: As a sign that Abram’s seed will inherit the land (15:8), the Lord YHVH, whom Abram has now come to know as *God Most High* (14:22), *cuts covenant* with Abram, revealing that his descendants (seed) who will not return from Egypt for four hundred years, have nevertheless, now already been given title to the land.

Genesis 17: 8-14: *Elohim* (God) tells Abraham that he and *all his seed after him throughout their generations* are to keep his Covenant. Their part in doing this is that the foreskin of all new-born males must to be physically cut off on the 8th day—they are to be circumcised. God cuts covenant with Abraham in relation to giving him and his descendants the land—Abraham and his descendants adhere to and guard that covenant by the ‘cutting’ of circumcision. Those whose flesh is not cut off in this way will themselves be ‘cut off’ from God’s covenant with the people of the land. **It is inheritance that is at stake here. God’s eternal Covenant with the physical seed of Abraham is forever integrally connected with the Land promised in that covenant.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISAAC

Genesis 17:19-22: *Elohim* clarifies that His Covenant with the seed of Abraham and the Land will and must come *through Isaac*. Although there will be blessings for Ishmael (who was also circumcised as part of Abraham’s house), the blessing of *this Covenant* will not continue through his seed (or that of anyone else). It must come through Isaac.

Note: on the 26th of October, Muslims will celebrate *Eid al-Adhai* (“Greater Solemn Festival”) in which they affirm and celebrate that Abraham obeyed God by the offering of *Ishmael*, not Isaac...that Isaac was in fact born as a gift for Ishmael’s faithfulness in yielding himself to be sacrificed (just before a goat was revealed as a substitute). They circumcise their own sons—but they have been deluded into following a covenant void of Life. God’s covenant brings LIFE. His Messiah *Yeshua/Jesus/Yasuah, the Way*, the Truth and the Life for the whole world, must come, through Isaac. **Please pray for the billions of Muslims around the world—that they receive supernatural revelation and understanding about the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life—who came forth through the Covenant people, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—who died, was buried, and was raised again on behalf of all the sons and daughters of Adam everywhere!**

***Circumcision is not a means of righteousness, it is a sign related to the unification in a particular place of a people God set apart and through whom His workings and blessings would be displayed and released to all the world. It was not introduced as part of the Torah (Law) of Moses, it is before the Law.** The Torah grants a glimpse of the nature of God, of his righteousness, and the requirements of that righteousness upon mankind with whom He desires fellowship. It also provided a (temporary) means of sacrifices for cleansing where those requirements were not perfectly met. It served as a “*schoolmaster to lead us all to Messiah.*”

***Yeshua (Jesus) was Himself identified with the people Israel and the Land (where He will one day physically reign) when He was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21).**

***Under the New Covenant, non-Jews in the nations who came to faith were not required to be circumcised.** Since it in no way was to be considered a means towards obtaining righteousness, its original purpose did not pertain to them (Acts 20:17-25; Epistle to the Galatians) - **but Messianic Jews continued to observe it** (also Acts 20:17-25). In Acts 16:1-5 it is recorded that Paul felt it imperative that Timothy, whose mother was Jewish, be circumcised.

It is impossible to come against God’s purposes for the Land of Israel without at some point crossing with His purposes for the people He chose to steward that Land.

***Forcing Jews to abandon circumcision, or convincing them so to do would succeed in divorcing them from the inheritance which circumcision insures—their title to the Land of Israel.**

***It should be instructive to realize that the initial places (Shechem, Bethel, Hebron) of God’s promises and covenant with Abraham regarding his seed (through Isaac) and the Land all lie within the boundaries presently demanded by the world within which to form a Muslim State in which NO Jews would be allowed to live.**

***The rationale behind demands for eradicating circumcision mirrors an ancient “Greek” (i.e. Secular Humanist) way of thinking. Such was the case in 164 BC when the Syrian king Antiochus IV *Epiphanes*, in his zeal to eradicate Judaism and**

replace it with a Greek way of life, worship and thought also forbade circumcision. Zechariah 9:13 refers to a coming conflict between these two ideologies in the last days.

A STORM IS QUICKLY RISING

Is it mere coincidence that the very week in which criminal charges are brought against a Jewish man for following in the obedience of his ancient father Abraham when he circumcised Isaac—a tropical storm predicted to become a hurricane has arisen in the Atlantic and is presently roaring towards Florida and the Gulf of Mexico—the name of which storm is

Isaac?

“Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion? Behold, he scatters his lightning about him and covers the roots of the sea. For by these he judges peoples...He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. They turn around and around by His guidance, to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world. Whether for correction, or for his land, or for love, He causes it to happen” (Job 36:29-31a; 37:11-13 ESV; Emphases ours).

May the Lord grant us ears to hear what His Spirit is speaking.

PLEASE PRAY:

***That the righteous within nations in which the Jewish covenant of circumcision is being threatened would rise up and take a stand against this prohibition; that their legislatures will implement laws protecting the rights of Jews to perform this ancient covenant practice given them by God.**

***God’s protection over the heartland specifically promised by covenant to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. It is this area which is now being threatened to come under permanent sovereignty of adherers to a different covenant.** (Later this week, Sept 25-Oct 1, all 193 members states of the UN will be gathered for the Annual Debate of the General Assembly, in which they are expected to be faced with a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.)

***Pray Ezekiel 36 over “the mountains of Israel” (an early Biblical name for the so-called “West Bank” of Judea and Samaria). It is here that the Lord GOD of Israel has promised the land will “shoot forth its branches and yield fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come” (vs. 8).**

***That Jews in the nations being held back from realigning with their Covenant homeland by fear or mammon will realize that the freedoms they have been granted in the nations to “bring Israel there” may not always be there. Pray that those God is calling to return to Israel at this time will, in the closing words of last weeks *Haftarah*: “Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch nothing unclean...go out from the midst of her, be clean...For the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (Isaiah 52:11-12).**

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 Torah and Haftarah portions for this week 26 August—1 September is called *Ki-Tetzeh*—"When you go out...(to war)":

TORAH: Deuteronomy 21:10—25:19

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 54:1-10

***Deuteronomy 21:21, 22:21, 22:22, 22:24; 24:7; 23:14.** *"Thus you shall purge away the evil from among you".* The word for "purge" may also be translated "to burn, kindle or root out". There are many situations and circumstances dealt with in these passages (some of necessity not making for the most pleasant reading) pointing to the fact that it is of great importance that God's people be 'set apart' and clean—both morally and physically, personally and as a community, *"since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you".*

***Deuteronomy 23:5.** *"Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you."*

***Deuteronomy 23:7.** *"You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land."* **We believe this admonition to still be in effect today. PLEASE PRAY for a love for Egypt among the Body in Israel, even as political relations appear to be moving in a dangerous direction. Pray for the Body in Egypt to rise up in faith and love and hope...and moving in the miraculous power of the Spirit of God.**

***Isaiah 54:2-3.** *"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited."* **PLEASE PRAY: That Israel will come into that place of righteousness in her Messiah which will allow God to extend her borders to encompass the territory which He has ordained for her, a territory from which she will never be plucked up.**

***Isaiah 54:5.** *“For your Maker is your husband, YHVH of Hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.”* **PLEASE PRAY:** For revelation in Israel that God loves her in an intimate way—and has provided a “Redeemer” for her, who is One with the Father... “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:3).

***Isaiah 54:7-8.** *“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, ’ says the LORD, your Redeemer.”*

***Isaiah 54:10.** *“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed, ’ says the LORD, who has mercy on you.”*



*Martin and Norma Sarvis
Jerusalem*

[The readings for next week 2-8 September are called *Ki-Tavo*—“*When you come in (to the Land)*”: TORAH: Deuteronomy 26:1—29:9; HAFTARAH: Isaiah 60:1-22.]

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*.