

that is pleasing to Him. When the Messiah Yeshua finally arrived, He helped clarify just how potent the finger of God can be, when He cast out demons, a major evidence that the Kingdom of God has manifest itself.

May we all bind our fingers with the Word of God, and pray that the finger of God has written it upon our redeemed hearts of flesh. By so doing, perhaps He will continue to extend His mercy to us, and beckon each of us closer to the work of His Kingdom, so that in short order in all of its fullness—the Kingdom will come! *May we be so blessed to see even greater works demonstrated by the finger of God in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead.*

**Bo בֹּא**  
**Go**  
**“Signs for Us”**

Exodus 10:1-13:16  
Jeremiah 46:13-28

This past week, the Lord has given me much to think about as I have meditated upon our Torah portion, which is most especially known for recording the Exodus of Ancient Israel from Egypt. Determining what to share can be rather difficult, as the Exodus is probably the most important event in our faith *after* the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. I believe that a systematic study of the Torah has the ability to help us scrutinize and mature in our individual walks of faith. The Torah portions compile the foundation for the rest of Scripture, and teach us valuable lessons that we must integrate into our relationship with God and our understanding of His plan for the ages.

In *Bo*, we see the final three judgments God issues upon Egypt,<sup>19</sup> the institution of the Passover,<sup>20</sup> and the departure of Israel and a mixed multitude from bondage.<sup>21</sup> Many diverse thoughts came to mind as I considered these things, going through the challenges of my own workweek. In retrospect, the element that best summarizes my experience this week concerns **the signs that we observe and how the Lord wants us to pay attention to what He is doing.**

Since the beginning of time, the Lord has used various phenomena to get the attention of the righteous, and of the world in general. These things may be physical indicators, they may be a message proclaimed, or when reading the Bible they may be grammatical forms used in the text to make an important point. Yeshua the Messiah said, “all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 22:44). Consequently, when we examine the Torah and Haftarah readings, we need to be looking for those various “signposts” that portray His redemption. Some of these things may be clear prophecies of the Messiah to come, but others may be subtle hints or patterns that can only be seen by a careful examination of Scripture. Regardless of which is the case, some distinct “signs” were used by God in order to communicate His power and supremacy to the Egyptians:

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 10:1-11:10.

<sup>20</sup> Exodus 12:1-32.

<sup>21</sup> Exodus 12:33-13:16.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform **these signs of Mine** [otai eleh, אֶתֵּי אֹתָי] among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed **My signs** [otai] among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.’” (Exodus 10:1-2).

Signs (Heb. sing. *ot*, אֹת) used by God may not always be good things, and not all signs need be specific prophecies or indicators of the Messiah to come. As we examine *Bo*, we find that *three signs* are scheduled to show both Israel and Egypt that the God of Israel is indeed the Creator and is superior to the elements. This would have been contrary to what the Egyptians believed, as they believed that the elements themselves were “gods.” Between the plague of locusts (Exodus 10:1-20), the imposition of a thick, tangible darkness (Exodus 10:21-29), and finally the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt (Exodus 11:1-10), the Pharaoh finally gets the message to let the people of Israel go. These signs indicate that God is not unwilling to judge the world when His demand of change goes unheeded. Pharaoh only capitulated to God’s demands when the plague of the firstborn was released (Exodus 12:30-41).

The most important sign seen, within *Bo* for certain, is the giving of the Passover. The Israelites are given a sign by God that will make them a distinct group of people set-apart from the Egyptians around them:

“Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that *same* night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs along with its entrails. And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD’s Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. **The blood shall be a sign for you** [v’hayah ha’adam l’khem l’ot, וְהָיָה הַדָּם לְכֶם לְאוֹת] on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it *as* a permanent ordinance” (Exodus 12:7-14).

Moses instructed the Ancient Israelites to apply the blood of the lambs upon the doorposts and doorframes of their dwellings. In so doing, the judgment that God issued upon the firstborn of Ancient Egypt does not apply to those who followed these instructions. In a summary remark that is repeated throughout the instructions of the Passover meal and Festival of Unleavened Bread, God stated that the remembrance of the Passover is a *chuqat olam* (חֻקַּת עוֹלָם), meaning “an ordinance for ever” (RSV), a “perpetual ordinance” (NRSV), or a “permanent statute” (HCSB).

Within the further instruction given regarding the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 13:7-10, 16), a rather intriguing remark is made so that the Israelites will remember how God delivered them forth with His mighty hand:

“And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:9).

A verse like Exodus 13:9 has been interpreted throughout Jewish history as meaning that one must literally “bind God’s Word” on the hand and forehead. In Exodus 13:16 the further remark is made, “So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead [לְאוֹת עַל־יְדֵי־כָה וְלִטּוֹפֹת בֵּין, *l’ot al-yadkhah u’l’totafot bein*], for with a powerful hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” The term *totafot* (טּוֹפּוֹת) can mean “bands, frontlet-bands, between the eyes” (BDB),<sup>22</sup> and this is why up until today, Orthodox Jewish men traditionally wrap *tefillin* (תּפּילין) or phylacteries at specified times of prayer.<sup>23</sup>

The key thrust of the Exodus 13:9, 16 instruction calls for God’s people to remember that what they do with their hands and with their minds is to be focused on His work. We certainly follow this every year when we keep the Passover, as we must work with our hands to prepare the meal. At the same time, we also have to consciously think about what the Passover and Exodus mean, and what they can teach us for our lives today. As a result, the Law of God will surely be on one’s mouth or speech, as we should want to discuss what it is telling us with others we meet.

By remembering to commemorate the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread in their future generations, is it possible that the Ancient Israel themselves **became a sign** to the nations around them (cf. Exodus 15:14-15)? Was not the Exodus itself a confirmation of the covenant established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Abraham about delivering his descendants from the bondage of Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:40-41; cf. Genesis 15:13)? By the mere existence of Israel and their consistent celebration of the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread, they would certainly testify to the world that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is faithful.

Today, via the growth of the Messianic movement, many people are being exposed to the significance of the Passover. Jewish Believers who remembered the Passover as a part of their upbringing in the Synagogue are experiencing great fulfillment as they get to see the Jewish Messiah in the *seder* meal. Evangelical Christians are discovering the great blessings of celebrating Passover, as they likewise experience enrichment and see how the Last Supper meal Yeshua conducted with His Disciples was the Passover. People around the world are returning to the ancient paths!

This can be a very confusing reality to many who have grown up in traditional Judaism and traditional Christianity. Both have taught for centuries that the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread *only apply* to the Jewish people. Christianity has largely replaced Passover with Easter, which is supposed to commemorate the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. But nowhere does the Bible negate the command to celebrate the Passover, nor are we to ever somehow forget the Exodus. On the contrary, Paul’s words to the Corinthians were, “let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8).

<sup>22</sup> BDB, 377.

<sup>23</sup> *Tefillin* are also employed in both Conservative and Reform Judaism, with women also frequently using them. Messianic Jewish practice certainly varies, as there are men who use *tefillin* in their daily prayers, those who interpret these verses somewhat metaphorically, and those of both genders who use *tefillin*.

Our ministry does believe that there is great value within the traditional Jewish prayers issued to God throughout the day, and that the discipline of wrapping *tefillin* can be an edifying spiritual exercise for those who practice it. *Tefillin* were certainly a part of the Second Temple Judaism in which Yeshua’s ministry functioned.

When we commemorate the Passover as Messianic Believers today, the message that we are to communicate is that the Lord is blessing us for remembering an event *that portrays what Yeshua has done for us*. We have a dual blessing that Jews who only celebrate Passover for what it represents for Israel, or Christians who only remember the Messiah's resurrection at Easter, miss out on.<sup>24</sup>

When you read the critical passages within our Torah portion, and apply them to your daily walk of faith, do you realize that you are to be a witness *or sign* of the work the Lord has done for us? We are to testify of His transforming power in our lives by obeying Him and by being blessed for our obedience. This includes being faithful to God among our family members, within our neighborhood, or in our work environment. All people need to see the Holy Spirit emanating from us when we keep a holiday such as Passover, so that they too can learn about the saving grace of Yeshua! **The challenge with this is that some of us may have to face some criticism or rejection from our peers.**

My prayer for you is that you can be a “sign” via a consistent walk of faith by following the Scriptures diligently, and representing Yeshua faithfully in a world that desperately needs Him. Yeshua the Messiah is **The Sign** who was crucified for our sins. As we choose to follow Him, let us in return be **a sign** for those many others perishing without a knowledge of His saving grace. Let us remember that Yeshua Himself was like the bronze serpent raised centuries earlier by Moses to bring salvation and deliverance for all who would believe upon Him in faith:

**“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-16; cf. Numbers 21:9).

Are you going to be **a sign** to others of the good news of salvation in Yeshua, the One who has provided us with final atonement for sin? What will you be doing the next time you celebrate Passover? Will you remember not only the Exodus of Ancient Israel from Egypt—but your own exodus from sin to new life in Him? Consider these things as you reflect on what Passover means to you.

## ***B'shalach*** בְּשַׁלַּח **After he had let go** **“An Ancient and Current Foe”**

Exodus 13:17-17:16  
 Judges 4:4-5:31 (A); 5:1-31 (S)

This week's Torah portion, *B'shalach*, is another excellent example of how important it is for us as Believers to really take the messages of Moses' Teaching quite seriously. *God lets the enemies of Israel harass His people in any generation*. Whether it be the Ancient Amalekites who attacked Israel in the early days of the Exodus sojourn, or various evil forces that try to

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<sup>24</sup> Consult the *Messianic Spring Holiday Helper* for a review of useful teaching articles and information on the significance of Passover.