

TORAHSCOPE:

Bo (Go)

by Mark Huey posted 30 January, 2009 www.outreachisrael.net

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

“Signs for Us”

“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 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 among them, **that you may know that I am the LORD**’” (Exodus 10:1-2).

This past week, the Lord has given me much to think about as I have meditated upon our Torah portion that details the Exodus of Ancient Israel from Egypt. Determining what to share can be difficult, as the Exodus is probably the most important event in our faith after the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua. I believe that the 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.

In *Bo*, we see the final three judgments upon Egypt, the institution of the Passover, and the departure of Israel and the mixed multitude from bondage. 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 phenomenon to get the attention of His people. 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 we need to be looking for those “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 the Scripture.

Signs used by God may not always be good things, either—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, the imposition of a thick, tangible darkness, and finally the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt, 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 message of change goes unheeded. Pharaoh only capitulated to God’s demands when the plague of the firstborn was released.

The most important sign seen in this week’s reading 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 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 instructs the Israelites to apply the blood of the lambs upon the lintels and doorposts of their dwellings. In so doing, the judgment that God issues upon the firstborn of Egypt will not apply to those who follow these instructions. In a summary remark that is repeated throughout the instructions of the Passover meal and Feast of Unleavened Bread, God states that this permanent ordinance will be a sign on one’s hand and forehead throughout all future generations:

“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).

Exodus 13:9 is interpreted by Orthodox Judaism as meaning that one must literally “bind God’s Word” on the hand and forehead. This is why Orthodox Jewish men wrap *tefillin* or phylacteries every morning during prayers.

Symbolically, this commandment calls us to remember that what we do with our hands and with our minds is to be focused on the work of the Lord. We 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 celebrate the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in future generations, **is it possible that the people of Israel themselves became a sign to the nations around them?** 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? By the mere existence of Israel and their consistent celebration of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, one is testifying to the world that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is faithful.

Today, we are finding multitudes of Believers in Yeshua who are discovering the great blessings of celebrating Passover. People around the world are returning to the ancient paths of our spiritual forefathers and becoming a witness to those who are seeking a relationship with the God of the Bible. **This is 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 Feast 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. 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). When we celebrate 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 would do 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.

When you read these passages of Scripture and apply them to your daily walk, do you realize that you are to be a witnesses 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 being blessed for our obedience. This includes being faithful to God among our family members, our neighborhood, or in our work environment. All 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 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 sin. As we choose to follow Him, let us in return be a “**sign**” for 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).

Are you going to be a sign to others of the good news of salvation in Yeshua? What will you be doing the next time you celebrate Passover? Will you remember not only the Exodus of 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.

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