

HAFTARAH EXHORTATIONS:

Haftarah Bo

by Mark Huey posted 31 January, 2009 www.outreachisrael.net

Jeremiah 46:13-28

“God Rules”

As the continuing saga of Israel's departure from Egypt proceeds, this week's *parashah* (Exodus 10:1-13:16), entitled *Bo* or “Go,” describes God's final three judgments upon Egypt and the first description of the Passover instructions. Freeing the Israelites from the clutches of Pharaoh is so difficult that extreme measures are taken, so that future generations will know of God's exploits against those who do not recognize His sovereignty. The explanation of the plague of locusts, the three days of darkness so heavy that one could feel it, and the death of the firstborn are described in detail. The Sages noted parallels in the words of Jeremiah, who described another time of judgment upon Egypt as Nebuchadnezzar expanded the influence of Babylon. We find a contrast between punishments meted upon Egypt, and the ultimate deliverance of the Jews who were to be taken into Babylonian captivity for only a limited time:

“I shall give them over to the power of those who are seeking their lives, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of his officers. Afterwards, however, it will be inhabited as in the days of old,” declares the LORD. **‘But as for you, O Jacob My servant, do not fear, nor be dismayed, O Israel! For, see, I am going to save you from afar, and your descendants from the land of their captivity; and Jacob will return and be undisturbed and secure, with no one making *him* tremble. O Jacob My servant, do not fear,’** declares the LORD, ‘For I am with you. For I will make a full end of all the nations where I have driven you, **yet I will not make a full end of you; but I will correct you properly and by no means leave you unpunished”** (Jeremiah 46:26-28).

The Exodus account and the ten judgments that provide the Israelites release from Egyptian servitude can be contrasted with those who follow human leaders, versus those who know the Creator God. Jeremiah understood these two options, describing the Pharaoh of Egypt as a big noise, compared to the Lord of hosts who looms like a prominent mountain:

“They cried there, ‘Pharaoh king of Egypt *is but* a big noise; He has let the appointed time pass by!’ **‘As I live,’ declares the King whose name is the LORD of hosts,** ‘Surely one shall come *who looms up* like Tabor among the mountains, or like Carmel by the sea” (Jeremiah 46:17-18).

Let's face it: the immutable Master of the Universe is not impressed by mere men, pretender gods, or some part of the created order that human beings elevate to godlike status. If people choose to worship the sun or the moon or elements like the Nile River or various creatures—or anything other than the Holy One of Israel—they are deceived and are following after false gods. In our Torah reading as the Lord is describing the procedure for avoiding the death of the firstborn, He states that a major part of what He is doing is to judge the gods of Egypt:

“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”** (Exodus 12:12).

The jealous God of Creation (Exodus 34:14) will not share His glory with anything that He has made, or anything that humanity misconstrues to be worthy of worship. The Egyptians discovered this in a very graphic way during the period of the Exodus, and later when they were enticed into an alliance with Judah prior to the Babylonian invasion. What is interesting is that even with these historical precedents duly recorded for us in Scripture, there is a coming time when these lessons are going to have to be repeated as the world will once again turn to leaders or other created things for so-called deliverance.

As is seen in the Book of Revelation, there are similarities between the judgments upon Egypt in Exodus, and what transpires against the entire world when the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) occurs at the End of this Age. Note some of the parallels between the ten judgments upon Egypt, and the seven bowls of wrath seen in Revelation 16:

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.’ So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. The second *angel* poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like *that* of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died. Then the third *angel* poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, ‘Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.’ And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.’ The fourth *angel* poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory. Then the fifth *angel* poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds. The sixth *angel* poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. (Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.) And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon. Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’ And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake *was it, and* so mighty. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe” (Revelation 16:1-21).

The similarities between the original Exodus judgments and those at the End of the Age include sores from the pestilence, bloody seas and rivers, a judgment upon the Nile and Euphrates Rivers, darkness and sun changes, earthquakes and hailstones. God, in essence, will use the created order to execute His punishment at some future time, just like He has done in the past. This pattern of punishment described in Revelation, while not necessarily exact, does warn us that these events will eventually take place. It is imperative for those of us who know the Holy One of Israel and who are studying His Word, that as we review passages from Exodus and Jeremiah and consider prophecies from the Book of Revelation, that we are mindful of our task to point people to the only solution to the problems to come.

In this week’s *parashah*, the physical acts of slaughtering a lamb at the designated time, and taking some of the blood and wiping it on the doorposts and lintels of the house, were the instruction to avoid the death angel. By faithfully obeying this command, the Israelite homes, and all of the livestock, were protected from the death of the firstborn that God used as His final judgment to get Pharaoh’s attention.

Similar to the Exodus, those of us living today have another event, which took place nearly two thousand years ago, that requires our faithful heartfelt acceptance in order to avoid eternal separation from our Creator. This is, of course, trust in the atoning work of the Messiah Yeshua, our Passover Lamb who paid the penalty for not only our iniquities, but our fallen nature in Adam. There in Jerusalem, hung on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13), pierced for our transgressions (Zechariah 12:10), He bled and died for us. He was buried and received the punishment that our transgressions merited.

Now if we believe in the Messiah Yeshua as our Savior and Redeemer, we do not have to turn to human leaders or nations for our deliverance and salvation. Instead, we turn wholly to Him and to Him alone for what is required for eternal life! He rules from Heaven above! If you want to spend eternity with Him, then you must believe in Him with all your heart in order for God's Spirit to take up residence in your new heart of flesh. Eventually in His timing alone, just like the Ancient Israelites in Egypt or the Jews who were exiled to Babylon, His greater plan of salvation and deliverance will be realized. The Prophet Ezekiel says,

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

How this all will take place is something only to be considered in the Lord's timing. We each often have to remember that the Ruler not only rules, but He makes the rules—including the time of the final ingathering. In the meantime, our responsibility is to witness to a lost and searching world. Living a life that is pleasing to Him, and proclaiming the good news pointing to Him, is required of each of us. Looking at passages of Scripture like the above on a consistent basis, so that we are reminded of our duties and obligations, helps immeasurably. Pretending these truths do not exist, or are only to be considered by those in full time ministry, is not an excuse.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and multitude of others down through the centuries, discovered that the Creator God rules regardless of whether human beings recognize it or not. Denying truth does not change or alter truth. Ignoring the rules of salvation according to the Scriptures has devastating consequences. One might think that if those in unbelief could only ask someone who has died in unbelief what happens, things would be different, but not even a man having come back from the dead could have convinced another's brothers to change their ways—if the Scriptures had not been able to convict them:

“And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead’” (Luke 16:27-31).

We have a Savior who raised from the dead! Believe in Him and His work! He is seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-34) and He rules (Matthew 28:18!

Until the restoration of all things...

Mark Huey (B.A., Vanderbilt University in History and Graduate Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) is the Director of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is the author of several books, including: *TorahScope, Volumes I & II*, and *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*. He is also co-author of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

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