

- “I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him” (Ecclesiastes 3:14).
- “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Fear to Hear

Do you fear the Lord? If so, are you able to discern His voice if and when He speaks to you? If you are unsure of any of this, learn *to fear and revere* God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Recall figures like Moses and Jeremiah, and others throughout the ages, who knew that the Holy One of Israel is a living God who can truly show up and be with you at any time He so chooses. Remember that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient—but most of all and that He is absolutely concerned about the intimate details of your life. **By fearing Him and getting to know Him, you will undoubtedly begin to hear His voice more clearly.**

Secondly, when you think about hearing His voice, make reading and meditating upon the words that we believe are absolutely His as recorded in the Bible a constant discipline. Learn to judge what you hear by the instruction of the Torah, the admonitions of the Prophets, the wisdom of the Writings, *and* the guidance of the Apostolic Scriptures. Meditate upon the examples of those who preceded you in faith, and learn how to emulate those who were truly able to obey the Lord when they heard Him.

Moses feared the Holy One of Israel, and he heard His voice clearly. Thankfully, what he heard has been recorded and retained for our collective edification, so that we can effectively serve Him today as well. If this does not bring you *to fear* the One who made you, then you might consider getting down on your face and crying out to Him for more mercy, **so that your fear of Him will result in hearing Him better.** Proverbs 13:12-14 offers us a critical thought:

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life. The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, **but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded.** The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn aside from the snares of death.”

May we all learn to fear Him, so that we may hear Him more clearly!

V'eira וָאֵרָא
I appeared
“The Finger of God”

Exodus 6:2-9:35
Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

In our Torah portion for this week, *V'eira* or “I appeared,” we continue to focus on the great deliverance that the Holy One of Israel will bring about, as He hears the cries and moans of

His chosen people in bondage to Ancient Egypt. As we learned last week in *Shemot*, the Lord has chosen to work through various human vessels to be His agents to communicate to the world that He is a covenant-keeping God, as Moses is used to speak of His will and demands to the Pharaoh. The word given to Abraham regarding how his descendants would only be strangers in a foreign land four centuries must come to a conclusion:

“And God said to Abram, **‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.** But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions” (Genesis 15:13-14).

The four centuries of oppression and enslavement to Ancient Israel are coming to an end, with the judgment upon Egypt and a dramatic deliverance of Israel ready to commence:

“And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, **‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.’** So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage” (Exodus 6:5-9).

Interestingly, we discover that as the Lord remembered His covenant and promises with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the oppression and bondage have been so cruel to the Israelites that the people turn a deaf ear to Moses. It is actually recorded, “they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery” (Exodus 6:9, ESV). Apparently, the lack of freedom and harsh treatment at the hands of the Ancient Egyptians had largely obliterated the Israelites’ hope of ever returning to the Promised Land. As we read through the narrative, Moses turned his attention to delivering the news of the soon coming plagues to Pharaoh and his court of counselors (Exodus 6:10-13).

For most of *V'eira*, the first seven plagues that God will issue upon Egypt are chronicled, including judgments of: blood,³ frogs,⁴ gnats,⁵ insects/wild beasts,⁶ death of livestock,⁷ boils,⁸ and hail.⁹ Moses and Aaron dynamically communicated the successive judgments that the Lord issued upon the various gods of Egypt, Egyptian pride and prestige, and the Egyptian people themselves—all the while with the Pharaoh hardening his heart¹⁰ to the requests of “Let My people go!”¹¹ Throughout the *parashah* the magnitude of the plagues and their specific objectives are detailed. But while reading and contemplating the

³ Exodus 7:14-25.

⁴ Exodus 8:1-15.

⁵ Exodus 8:16-20.

⁶ Exodus 8:21-32.

⁷ Exodus 9:1-7.

⁸ Exodus 9:8-17.

⁹ Exodus 9:18-35.

¹⁰ Exodus 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34-35.

¹¹ Exodus 7:16; 8:1, 20f; 9:1, 13.

implications of these horrific challenges for the people of Egypt, it becomes quite clear that the people of Israel were being separated out as those who have the favor and protection of the Initiator of the plagues, God Himself.

By the time the third plague arrived, that of gnats—after water was turned to blood and there had been a frog attack—the magicians of the Egyptian court were not able to imitate the plague. Earlier, they were able to turn their staffs into snakes (Exodus 7:11), turn water into blood (Exodus 7:22), and bring frogs up from the river (Exodus 8:7), but when the gnats came up from the dust of the ground, the secret arts of the sorcerers could not match the “finger of God”:

“Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, **‘This is the finger of God.’** But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said” (Exodus 8:19).

From this point on until the actual Exodus transpires, the distinct separation of the Israelites from the Egyptians became crystal clear. The Lord was setting His people apart in order to communicate eternal principles to not only instruct them, but also the Egyptians:

“But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land. **And I will put a division between My people and your people.** Tomorrow this sign shall occur” (Exodus 8:22-23).

Let us not think, though, that the “difference” (NKJV) which is intended between God’s people and those of Egypt is simply so—as later generations might have viewed it—the chosen can have a sense of self-pride about them. Throughout *V’eira* we see that God’s intention is to make His glory and power known to the whole Earth. With this comes the missional imperative that as His judgment falls, *all people are to acknowledge and turn to Him* for their deliverance:

- “But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there; **that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth**” (Exodus 8:22, RSV).
- “For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, **so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth**” (Exodus 9:14).
- “But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and **in order to proclaim My name through all the earth**” (Exodus 9:16).
- “Moses said to him, ‘As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, **that you may know that the earth is the LORD’s**” (Exodus 9:29).

Throughout the ordeal of plagues, the protective hand of the Almighty was ever-present and steady over the Israelites, as the Egyptians are pummeled. The “finger of God,” *etzba Elohim* (אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים), was raised from the Heavenly realm to point out that there is a distinct difference between those who trust in Him, and those who look to mortal rulers like the Egyptian Pharaoh for guidance. In many ways, as God judged Egypt, it was almost like He drew a line in sand to demarcate the difference between being His own and protected from His anger, versus the alternative of having to see His omnipotent power be issued against idols.

A Powerful Stylus

As I read our Torah portion, and specifically those parts regarding the different plagues issued upon Egypt, I was really struck by the concept of **the finger of God**. After all, this is a powerful mental image of an anthropomorphic description of our Heavenly Father. Even the unbelieving Egyptian magicians were able to discern that a Supreme Power had used His abilities to spring up gnats from out of the dust of the ground. *It was something that they were unable to duplicate*. Looking for other places in Scripture where “finger of God” terminology is used, a most notable location where it appears is how it is used to describe how the Lord inscribes the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments:

- “And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, **written by the finger of God** [*ketuvim b’etzba Elohim*, כְּתוּבִים בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים]” (Exodus 31:18).
- “The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone **written by the finger of God** [*ketuvim b’etzba Elohim*]; and on them *were* all the words which the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly” (Deuteronomy 9:10).

The finger of God transcribed the Ten Commandments, the highest principles that the human race has ever been given to follow. The powerful image of God’s hand, and by extension His finger, actually touching stone tablets and hewing out the Ten Words is a most comforting thought. After all, as the Great Shepherd guided His people away from the plagues and devastation falling upon Ancient Egypt, His hand and now finger were visible in actions of deliverance. So much more intimacy can be achieved with *a finger*, as opposed to just a hand!

Looking at some other times in the Torah where the finger is used, we find that it is a critical component of the examination and healing of lepers (Leviticus 14:2-57). The priests were to dip their fingers into the blood of various sacrifices in order to apply the atoning blood to the altar horns, or sprinkle it before the veil of offering (Leviticus 4). The finger is used when the sacrifice of the red heifer is used to purify the altar (Leviticus 19:2-22). Each of these things signifies an intimacy that is relegated to the finger of a human person, as the priest in each ritual serves as a proxy for God.

Yeshua’s Finger Pointing

Considering the concept of the finger of God, I was drawn to a significant place in the Gospels which employs this description. In the Gospel of Luke, Yeshua the Messiah made use of the finger of God,¹² when He was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul. After giving His Disciples some instruction about prayer (Luke 11:2-4), He then goes on to describe how giving and how merciful the Heavenly Father is when we approach Him and ask for needed things (Luke 11:5-13). In an act of great mercy, Yeshua cast out a demon from a dumb man (Luke 11:14), in the sight of those gathered to hear His words of hope.

At this point, some doubters began to resist Him with questions. The Lord is accused, “No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons” (Luke 11:15, NLT). Insults are hurled at Yeshua, along with further challenges for Him to

¹² Grk. *daktulō Theou* (δακτύλῳ θεοῦ).

demonstrate additional supernatural signs (Luke 11:16). Yeshua responded to all of the naysayers with some excellent instruction about how the enemy uses division to tear down kingdoms, and by extension, people, families, fellowships, congregations, and even nations:

“But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, **‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.** And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. **But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.** When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are undisturbed; but when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder. He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters!” (Luke 11:17-23).

Reading these words of instruction and applying them to my own life and recent experiences, I was once again intrigued by how the study of the Torah is indeed most beneficial to consider on a consistent basis!

I thought about the concept of division and how the enemy uses all sorts of distortions to bring division, strife, and contention into our own hearts, or our families, and also various congregational assemblies. The Devil knows that if he can make an entity divide over an issue—most frequently something which can be rather small and insignificant—he has a much better chance of creating havoc, chaos, and a lack of peace. This can happen to a person who has let some unclean spirit have access to him, due to sin that has not been confessed and repented of. It can occur to families, as the enemy exploits lack of oneness and harmony in a marital relationship, or the frequent lack of honor displayed by children for fathers and mothers and/or harsh treatment of children on the part of parents. Wherever we willingly give the Adversary an opening, he is apt to take advantage of the opportunity to rob, steal, and destroy us of our joy and peace.

When it comes to groups of Messiah followers, the variety of opinions and beliefs that are often present can frequently complicate matters. Because we are all “works in progress” and humanly limited—with none of us truly having the intricacies of God *fully* understood—the possibilities for confusion are multiplied exponentially. This is particularly a problem when we need to be mindful of the words of Yeshua, and to utilize the sensitivity of casting out demons by the “finger of God.” Just as the finger is more useful in cleaning out the burrs caught in the wool coats of sheep, or cleaning disease or debris from the tender eyes of newborn lambs, so is the finger able to point out the errors of the human fold as we assemble together. And yet, the Book of Proverbs tells us plainly that it is the *pointing of a finger* which can be considered an attribute of a worthless and wicked person:

“A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a false mouth, who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, **who points with his fingers;** who with perversity in his heart devises evil continually, who spreads strife. Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; instantly he will be broken, and there will be no healing” (Proverbs 6:12-15).

Consider this admonition, and realize that it is finger pointers who are most often the ones who cause contention. In the immediate verses following, the Lord lists some of the main things He hates:

“There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises

wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers” (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Is it possible that in the context of describing a wicked and worthless person who *is always pointing fingers*, the things which are abominable to the Lord are often the negative, personal characteristics traits of the actual finger pointer? Instead of finger pointing and spreading strife and contention with the tongue, the Book of Proverbs actually gives us a much better usage for fingers. Here in a passage that has been traditionally used in Judaism to help emphasize the need to wrap *tefillin* (תפילין) or phylacteries,¹³ it is suggested that instead of pointing with fingers, the faithful should bind God’s commandments upon their fingers:

“My son, keep my words, and treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, **and my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers** [*qashreim al-etzbe’oteykha*, קָשְׂרֵם עַל־אֲצְבָעֵיכֶם]; **write them on the tablet of your heart**” (Proverbs 7:1-3).

Here, God’s people are instructed to keep His words and treasure His commandments in order to live in harmony. Are these words not the very words that originate directly from **the finger of God**? The instruction here is to keep these His words as the “apple of your eye,” or to let God’s Law be your filter through which you observe everything that you do in life. And, if it takes one going through the regular discipline of binding *tefillin* on your fingers, do it so that you will be reminded to inscribe His commandments into your own heart and mind!¹⁴

The Finger of God and His Kingdom

When Yeshua asserted, “if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20), He did not choose His words aimlessly. He knew that evidence of the Father’s abilities and sovereignty was demonstrated by Himself as Son. Yeshua surely knew that the finger of God had been used to write the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone, and what the Book of Proverbs had to say about the misuse or abuse of one’s finger. When Yeshua declared that He exercised demons by the finger of God—and that it was appropriate evidence that the Kingdom of God had manifested itself—the Lord executed proper judgment by His use of the finger.

Yeshua’s continuing instruction remarks about the need for strong, properly equipped people of God to powerfully protect and guard their homesteads and possessions (Luke 11:18-23). These words can be understood on various spiritual and physical levels. As the followers of the Most High, it is our responsibility to remain strong and vigilant to strongly protect ourselves, our families, and our local assemblies from the wiles and distractions of the enemy. We know that in the spiritual arena that we war not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities in high places. The Apostle Paul directs our attention to some of the specific spiritual equipment available, to maintain our strength and overcome the world forces of darkness:

¹³ Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8.

Cf. Michael V. Fox, “Proverbs,” in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1459.

¹⁴ For a further discussion of related topics, consult the author’s article “Unity, Despite Diversity in the Body of Messiah,” appearing in the December 2010 issue of Outreach Israel News.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH [Isaiah 11:5], and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS [Isaiah 59:17], and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE [Isaiah 52:7]; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION [Isaiah 59:17], and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:12-17).

After describing how “we are not contending” (RSV) or “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (ESV), likened unto a kind of “battle” (HCSB), Paul describes a variety of key weapons that are to be employed against the Adversary. The Lord Himself is described as a Warrior who goes out to battle for His people. Isaiah 42:13 exclaims, “The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse *His* zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies.” Psalm 35:1-3 says, “Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of buckler and shield and rise up for my help. Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me; say to my soul, ‘I am your salvation.’” Part of being an imitator of God (Ephesians 5:1) is going out and joining the fight against evil! The various elements of the armor of God are derived directly from the Tanakh:

Girded Loins and the Breastplate of Righteousness:

“But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist” (Isaiah 11:4-5).

“He put on righteousness like a breastplate...” (Isaiah 59:17).

Feet Shod with the Gospel of Peace

“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, *and* says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7).

Shield of Faith

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, **I am a shield to you**; Your reward shall be very great’” (Genesis 15:1).

“For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor **as with a shield**...As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tried; **He is a shield** to all who take refuge in Him... The LORD is my strength **and my shield**; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him” (Psalm 5:12; 18:30; 28:7).

Helmet of Salvation¹⁵

“...a helmet of salvation on His head...” (Isaiah 59:17).¹⁶

¹⁵ Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

The analogies of girded loins or belt for protection, a chest covering breastplate, appropriate protective shoes, a shield, a helmet, and a sword, all suggest that the struggle God's people are to endure is *interminable warfare* going from battle to battle. The implied fact that the faithful soldier of God can utilize His truth, His righteousness, the gospel of peace, personal faith, the salvation experience, and the (spoken) Word of God¹⁷ is to give him or her great comfort. But if these spiritual weapons and tools are not employed during the frequent skirmishes, then victory over the Devil and his temptations will not be achieved. Paul elaborates on this point to the Corinthians, as he notes that within the spiritual war we fight, we are to take every thought captive, and see that any speculation or lofty thing raised up against God is taken down:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God**, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).¹⁸

Ephesians 6:12-17, especially with its various intertextual references from the Tanakh Scriptures, is excellent advice to men and women of God who urgently desire to have **the best protection available for defending themselves** from the attacks of the spiritual forces of wickedness. If we do not possess each of these protective armaments, and even offensive weapons, then we will only find ourselves in a weakened position, which will allow the enemy to harass, attack, and render us almost completely ineffective for the Lord's service.

The Power of the Finger

So much of what people can do with their fingers, be it throughout history or even today, can involve harsh judgment, mean-spirited accusation, or just scolding or complaining. While we often think of the classic scene of someone waving the index finger at someone else, indicating displeasure over a situation, I really would be remiss if I did not at least mention how the most widespread insulting gesture used in much of Western society is directed by *the middle finger*, frequently with profanity spoken.

The fingers on a person's hands do make human beings different from the animals. Fingers are most often the means by which we get to demonstrate our great abilities through writing, artwork, construction, gardening, athletic activities, and many other useful things that testify of the unique skills God has blessed each of us with. *Let us not be found ever misusing our fingers!*

¹⁶ Also detailing the armor of God is Wisdom 5:17-20 in the Apocrypha:

“The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; he will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against the madmen.”

For a further evaluation of the armor of God, consult the commentary *Ephesians for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee.

¹⁷ Ephesians 6:17 employs *rhēma Theou* (ῥῆμα θεοῦ) and is likely the spoken gospel message of salvation (cf. Ephesians 5:26). The principal way this is to be accomplished is obviously using the written Word of God.

¹⁸ For some further thoughts, consult the author's article “Waging War: Fight the Good Fight,” appearing in the August 2010 issue of Outreach Israel News.

Yeshua the Messiah issues the rather severe warning, “**He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters**” (Luke 11:23). The objective of the Adversary is one of division, as Satan takes the opportunity to overwhelm those who do not protect themselves from his attacks and temptation. Surely, if one does not gather with the Messiah, and is accomplishing more in terms of dividing God’s people and causing discord, then you are opposed to Him and are responsible for the inadvertent scattering of His flock. This is not a place where any seekers of the Holy One should want to be! While there are surely legitimate reasons to be divided, such as casting people out of assemblies who bring in severe theological error or heresy, the great majority of things “God’s people” get divided over most often concern minutiae.

Each of us needs to be fully committed in our desire to be conformed to the image of Messiah Yeshua (Romans 8:29), with His teachings and example for living permeating every aspect of our being. *His example of faithfulness unto the Father should be our heartbeat and credo.* It is imperative that after you have had any demons, evil spiritual forces, or just bad influences cast out of your life by the finger of God, it is critical to let this same finger of God write His commandments onto your heart, as is promised in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; cf. Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:14-18). It is not simply enough to see unclean spirits removed from one’s heart, if it is not followed by being filled and transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Yeshua’s definite warning is that demonic influences *can return* to people if there is not a change of behavior enacted:

“When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first” (Luke 11:24-26).

Here, the unclean spirit cast out into “dry places” (KJV) looks for a house to occupy. So it returns to the habitation from which it was cast out, and discovering the place “swept and put in order,” it goes and gets seven other spirits, *more evil than itself*, and returns to further torment the one from whom it was cast. This is a terrible fate, **but lamentably it can be the result of many who get delivered from demons, yet then do not let the Word of God change the way they live** and how they are to obey God. A temporary deliverance from sin and evil influences is followed by a relapse and return to sin, and the person who was delivered allows the demon *with his evil companions* to re-enter. The person forgets or neglects to cry out and ask that he or she be filled up with the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) and His truth to fill the void.

This tragic oversight is primarily a byproduct of unbelief and a lack of faith. The great irony is that although many people often witness the almost tangible deliverance power of **the finger of God** and get a glimpse of His Kingdom in action, they react like the Ancient Egyptians of millennia ago. They make it a practice to harden their hearts to the requirements to cry out to the God of Israel for mercy, repenting of their evil ways, and seeing the void in their hearts filled up the void with faith and love provided by God’s Spirit.

The Egyptian magicians were in awe when the finger of God brought forth gnats from the ground. They knew that the God of the Hebrews was very powerful. Yet, they did not repent and cry out to Him for salvation and deliverance, and they suffered the consequences of their pride. Months later, that same finger of God wrote the Ten Words onto tablets of stone that would frame the entire Torah, and help define the instructions for living a life

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 בָּא
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,¹⁹ the institution of the Passover,²⁰ and the departure of Israel and a mixed multitude from bondage.²¹ 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:

¹⁹ Exodus 10:1-11:10.

²⁰ Exodus 12:1-32.

²¹ Exodus 12:33-13:16.