

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Jehovah's Feast Days

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Signs, Symbols & Spiritual Icons

Reading:
Joel Chapter 3

1. Introduction

The dictionary defines a **Sign** as **something perceived that suggests the existence of a fact, quality or condition, either past, present or future.**

Today we have reached the **Last Day of Unleavened Bread**. We have spent a week ensuring that there is no leaven (yeast) in our food and in our homes. It's been a week of concentration and watchfulness: a week when we have closely examined the food we have eaten. Some of you are glad it's over and you can now get back to a loaf of bread and some fluffy cakes. But wait. Let us never forget what this past week symbolizes:

- **Salvation** through the blood of the **Passover Lamb**. That is, salvation through the death of Jesus Christ, **Yeshua the Messiah**.
- **Holiness** through the power of his blood: a total exclusion from our lives of **'leaven'** which represents **sin, hypocrisy and falsehood**.
- The **seven-day week** which represents eternity.

In short, keeping this **Week of Unleavened Bread** has been a declaration of faith in **Yeshua the Lamb of God** who came to **'save his people from their sins'** - for all time. (Matthew 1: 21)

Exodus 12: 13: *"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and **when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.***
14: ***And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.***
15: *Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.*
16: *And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.*
17: *And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; **for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your***

generations by an ordinance for ever.

18: *In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.*

19: *Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, **whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.***

20: *Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.”*

2. Human Signs / Symbols

We live in world in which **signs, symbols** and **icons** are used every day. Indeed without them communication between individuals would be very difficult. Consider the use of signs in the following:

- **The Alphabet** where each letter is a sign or symbol representing a sound.
- **Hand Signals / Salutes**
- **Rings / Badges/National Flags**
- **The ASCII Code** where each alpha character is represented by a number.
- **Signatures / Passwords / Icons**

Every computer user, especially those using Windows applications, knows the importance of **signs, symbols** and **icons**. Every car owner is equally acquainted with traffic signs and symbols. Disaster always results when drivers ignore traffic signs.

3. Signs of the Times

Far more important are the **Signs of the Times**. Failure to recognize these signs is **spiritual illiteracy** and could be catastrophic.

- **Signs of the Saviour's Return**

Matt 24:3 ... *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the **sign of thy coming**, and of the end of the world?*

The Saviour's reply was: There shall be **wars / famines / disease epidemics / natural disasters / faithlessness in the church / broken homes / sexual licence etc.** All this is happening on a world-wide scale.

- **Anti-Semitism.** This is evidence that the spirit of Satan is at work. Lucifer hates Israel, the chosen people of God, with a diabolic hatred.
- **Distress on earth.**
- **The Gospel going to all the world.**
- **Celestial Signs:** In addition to the above there will be signs in the heavens, in the sun, moon and stars.

Gen. 1:14 ... *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs**, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

Luke 21:10 *Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and **great signs shall there be from heaven.***

Rev.6:12

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13: *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

14: *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and **every mountain and island were moved out of their places.***

15: *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the*

mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16: And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Joel 3:30 **And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.**

- **Signs and Wonders**

Matthew 24: 24: *“For there shall arise false Christ's and **false prophets** and shall shew **great signs and wonders**, inasmuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

The miracles, signs and wonders being performed by false prophets in the Christian church are proof that this prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. See our article entitled **Miracles**.

Revelation 13: 13: *“And he doeth **great wonders**, so that he maketh fire come down in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on earth by the means of those **miracles** which he hath power to do in the sight of the beast.”*

Revelation 16: 13: *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

*14: **For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”*

2 Thessalonians 2: 9: *“Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with **all power and signs and lying wonders**.”*

4. Signs of Faith

When understood and correctly applied, the Bible lists several **divine signs** which are **symbolic signs of faith**. They go far beyond all other signs and point to the believer's inner conviction and love for the Almighty.

The Weekly Sabbath

- For example the **weekly Sabbath** is the divinely appointed **sign of sanctification** between the God of Israel and His people. (Exodus 31: 13-18)
*“It (the **Sabbath**) is a **sign** between me and the children of Israel for ever.” (Ezekiel 20: 12)
“Moreover also I gave them my **Sabbaths**, to be a **sign** between me and them, **that they might know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify them.**”*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

- Another sign is the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**; which is the eternal sign on the **hand** (representing one's actions) and in the **forehead** (representing one's beliefs) that the possessor is an obedient child of the Almighty God. As mentioned above, during this week believers put all traces of leaven (yeast) out of their homes and diets. It is an annual declaration that the believer wants the Almighty to put all **sin, hypocrisy and false doctrine** out of his/her mind. It is a sign of sanctification and holiness. (Exodus 13: 9)
*“And it (the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**) shall be for a sign upon thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth.”*

5. The Cost of Failure

Failure to recognize the foregoing signs, be they in society, in the heavens or in the church, could be catastrophic.

It could result in being hopelessly deceived, with the possible loss of eternal life! Consider what happened long ago when Israel failed to recognize the **'signs of the times.'**

Matthew 16: 3: *“And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the **signs of the times?**”*

Luke 19: 41: *“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
42: Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.
43: For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
44: And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.**”*

Here is evidence that ancient Israel failed to recognize **Yeshua** as their Messiah and they blindly put him to death. The repercussions of that colossal blunder resulted in the death of millions down through the centuries. **“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”** (Matthew 27: 25)

6. Asking for Miracles

Alas the Christian church is no better than ancient Israel. It is full of believers constantly asking God for miracles to quell personal doubts. This is a dangerous development in the church. It indicates that **spiritual adultery** has become the norm. The Bible describes Christians who keep asking God for **'signs,'** as a **'faithless and adulterous generation.'**

Mark 8: 11: *“And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of **him a sign from heaven,** tempting him.
12: And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.”*

Matthew 12: 38: *“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would **see a sign from thee.**
39: But he answered and said unto them, **An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;** and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:”*

7. King Josiah's Example

Much rather should we imitate the example set by young king **Josiah** of Judah. He came to the throne at the tender age of 8 years. In the 18th year of his reign, when just a young man of 26 years, Josiah organized the greatest **Passover celebration** ever to be held to that day. Highlights of the occasion were:

2 Chronicles 34: 19: *“And it came to pass, when the king had heard the **words of the law,** that he rent his clothes.
20: And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,
21: Go, enquire of the **LORD** for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the **words of the book** that is found: for great is the wrath of the **LORD** that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the **LORD,** to do after all that is written in this book.”*

In 2 Kings 23 Josiah's actions are described. We will briefly list them:

- Verse 4: The destruction of all the vessels used in **Baal worship.**
- Verse 5: The dismissal of all priests who worshipped the **starry host.**
- Verse 6: The burning of the **Asherah.** **“The wooden pole or mast which stood at Canaanite places**

of worship. Originally it was, perhaps, the trunk of a tree with the branches chopped of, and was regarded as the wooden symbol of the Goddess Asherah, who like Ashtoreth was the type of fertility.” (Westminster Dictionary of the Bible)

- Verse 7: Josiah demolished the houses of the **‘sodomites.’** You can be certain that **sodomy (homosexuality)** is a grievous sin in the eyes of Almighty God. Modern translations of the Bible have removed the word **‘sodomite’** from their renderings. **Take note!**
- Verse 11: He destroyed all the trappings of **sun-worship** and the Altar king Jeroboam had erected many, many years before.
He destroyed the high places in the presence of the wayward priesthood whom he later wiped out - **‘burning their bones.’** (symbolic of eternal destruction)
2 Kings 23: 21: *“And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.
22: **Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah.”***
- He put an end to all forms of **spiritism.**
2 Kings 23: 24: *“Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, **that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book** that Hilkiyah the priest found in the house of the LORD.
25: *And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.”**

Bear in mind that king Josiah began this purge during the PASSOVER Week of Unleavened Bread. That is a highly significant fact; because that young king was doing exactly what the **Week of Unleavened Bread** signifies. He was putting **‘leaven’** (which represents **sin, hypocrisy** and **pagan worship** out of Israel).

And yet, all these experiences, real enough though they were, are simply **types, illustrations** and **shadows** of the work of a King far greater than Josiah - **King Yeshua!** When Yeshua, the King of kings returns to take up the throne of David, the greatest Passover of all time will be observed and a much more permanent form of cleansing will be accomplished. Josiah was the **type, a shadow** and **forerunner** of **King Yeshua**, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

1 Corinthians 10: 11: *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”*

8. With all thy Might

The **Week of Unleavened Bread** stands for holiness and total commitment to Yahweh the LORD God of Israel.

Deuteronomy 6: 5: *“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
6: And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
7: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
8: And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”*

9. Finish your Course

Believers must not only serve God with total commitment; with all their heart, soul and mind; but they must do so - **all their lives!**

Matthew 22: 37: *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”*

Jesus said

John 17: 4: *“I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”*

Paul said

Acts 20: 24: *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”*

10. What about You?

We all have a course to run, a job to do and a crown to win. It matters not what that course or job is. What matters is:

- **Are you doing it with all your might?**
- **And are you going to finish it?**

You must if you want to say with Paul

2 Timothy 4: 5: *“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

6: For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

May the Almighty grant us all the grace, the wisdom, the strength to do just that. So that when our Saviour returns we will hear those wonderful words:

Matthew 25: 23: *“His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”*

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada
Home

www.avoicethewilderness.org
www.avitw.ca