

Sunday August 28th 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Four

1). Ex 3:11 ¶ *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."*

We had seen last week that there is a first mention principle with regards to supernatural signs found in the Book of Exodus. Moses and Aaron were empowered by God to perform certain signs in the presence of the children of Israel as a validation that they were sent to the nation by God to fulfill His purpose for the nation – Ex 4:1 ¶ *Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" 2 So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." 3 And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." 6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. 7 And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. 8 "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. 9 "And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."*

a). And the purpose God had is something clearly seen in Exodus 3:11 – to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.

b). And of course bringing Israel out of Egypt was for a very specific purpose - Ex 4:21 *And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"*

It had to do with the rights of the firstborn with respect to rulership; rulership at the head of the nations within a Theocracy established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Ex 3:16 ¶ *"Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; 17 "and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"*

c). And so our first mention principle shows us that supernatural signs are given to the Jews, they are for the purpose of showing that the one sent to the nation is from God and the message of the one sent is about Kingdom rule in the land of promise. This is how things were established with regards to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt and when they failed exactly the same principle was seen with Joshua and the second generation – Jos 3:7 ¶ *And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.*

Jos 10:12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

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d). The Theocracy had already begun under Moses on the day that the glory of God filled the Tabernacle in the wilderness and under Joshua the nation within the Theocracy moved into the land of promise. And the Theocracy continued there for some 500 years or so. However, as we know, Israel's continual disobedience brought matters to such a dire state that the Theocracy was in danger of being brought to an end during the days of the divided kingdom, and it was at this time that both Elijah and Elisha were empowered by God to perform supernatural signs in order to call the nation to repentance. And this call to repentance also needs to be seen within the context of a pattern set in place through the time of the Judges, recorded in the Book of that name - Jg 2:18 *And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.*

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And the pattern is easy to see – Israel in repentance would be delivered from their bondage by a deliverer and blessing would follow. In the days of Elijah and Elisha Israel was in bondage to other gods, being led there by their king.

e). Should they have repented they would have been delivered from this bondage, the Theocracy would have remained and blessing would follow. But as we know this was not the case.

f). Ultimately captivity followed, the Theocracy came to an end and the times of the Gentiles began. And although a remnant of Jews were back in the land and in Jerusalem at the time of the Lord's first advent Israel was still separated from the Theocracy and subject to the nations over which she was supposed to rule.

g). And into this setting came the Messiah - Ga 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

And going before Him was the forerunner with the simple and yet game changing message - Mt 3:1 ¶ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"*

Following the pattern set in Judges national repentance would be met by a Deliverer, who was already on the scene, who would deliver the nation not only from Gentile domination, but also from the realm from which Gentile world power emanates, rule from the heavens over the earth, by taking that realm from Satan and his angels and establishing a repentant Israel in both locations, earthly and heavenly, fulfilling the promise given to Abraham.

h). And when the word of the Messenger was not believed supernatural signs flourished in a way that had never been seen in Israel before to validate both the Messenger and His message concerning 'the Kingdom of the Heavens' Joh 3:1 ¶ *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

i). And we will remember that it is on the same day as the rejection of the sign of the Sabbath and the attributing of the performance of supernatural signs, which no one can do 'unless God is with him', to 'Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons' by Israel's religious leaders, seen in Matthew Chapter 12, that Jesus leaves the house to go and sit by the sea beginning the Matthew 13 parables.

j). And it is those taking center stage in these parables, the one new man, the Church, who, following the Lord's death and resurrection, re-offer rule from the heavens over the earth to the same eternally saved generation of Jews who had crucified their Messiah from about 33AD - 62AD.

k). And this was done to provoke the Jews to jealousy so as to cause them to repent - Ro 11:11 *I say then, have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation [spirit and soul] has come to the Gentiles.*

We will remember that the Church at its beginning was severely persecuted by the Jews witnessed through Paul's actions before his conversion, and here were those who the Jews reviled and rejected not only growing in numbers, but proclaiming the Word of the Kingdom which was accompanied by supernatural signs.

l). And as time went on this same message and accompanying signs was proclaimed by an increasing number of Gentiles, those who the Jews considered no better than dogs.

m). Seeing all of this the Jews should have realized that, 'this message and these signs should belong to us, let's repent, be delivered and experience the blessing of God', the very thing declared by Peter following the healing of the man at the gate of the Temple called 'Beautiful' - Ac 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

n). And as we had noted at the end of last week it is into this context that John writes his Gospel.

2). And it is remarkable to see that the Holy Spirit inspires John to begin his Gospel at exactly the same point that He had inspired Moses to begin over 1400 years before - 'In the beginning.....'

Ge 1:1 ¶ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 ¶ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Joh 1:1 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 ¶ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [overcome] it.

The Holy Spirit through Moses introduces God in one fashion through the use of the Hebrew word 'Elohim', meaning more than one and the same Holy Spirit through John, following Messiah's advent, presents God from a slightly different perspective providing commentary on that seen in Genesis.

a). The 'Word' is the Lord Jesus Christ - Joh 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

b). And it is the Word, Jesus the Christ, who was in the beginning with God when God created the heavens and the earth and then in the very clearest and direct of ways Christ's deity is affirmed, 'And the Word was God'. The word translated 'was' is the Greek word 'eimi' that is used in a sense that transcends time, literally having no beginning and no ending – therefore we should understand this statement to mean, 'the Word always was and always will be God', just as the scripture confirms - Heb 13:8 *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

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c). This is a truth so sublime and so profound that we would do well to meditate upon it for the remainder of our time on this earth – the Word cannot be separated from God and God cannot be separated from the Word – Mal 3:6 *"For I am the LORD, I do not change;*

God never changes, the Word never changes – God cannot speak apart from the Word as to do so He would have to speak apart from Himself – Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [the Word] 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, [the Word made flesh] whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

God cannot act apart from the Word as to do so He would have to act apart from Himself - Joh 6:38 *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

d). So to take this sublime truth back to where we were looking at signs a short while ago, people may ask you, 'Isn't the all-powerful God able to

empower individuals in the Church today to perform supernatural signs if He wants?' And we might be tempted to answer, 'Being God He can do whatever He likes', but that would be to miss the whole point of what we have hopefully just learned. No, God cannot empower individuals within the Church today to perform supernatural signs, because to do so would contradict that which is in the Word from the beginning, to do so He would have to deny the Word which would be to deny Himself and that He cannot do –

2Ti 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

e). This is extremely helpful for us because we can know without a doubt that what God has placed in His Word remains an unchanging constant. It is not subject to social mores, to culture, to situational ethics, to what is acceptable in society because God cannot possibly be subject to such things and He is the Word and the Word is God; pure and simple.

f). *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* In Genesis we see God's creative process firstly from the time, 'in beginning' and then through 6 days of restorative work leading into the 7th day. In John 1:3 we find a succinct statement that encompasses God's creative process past, present and future. There is nothing that has been 'made' or ever will be 'made' apart from the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Very simply then 'all things' 'made' are made through the Son, who is the Word, who is God.

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g). Ge 1:1 ¶ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* As God began the heavens and the earth were created through the One who is the Word. Then when the original ruler of the heavens and the earth was created he also was created through the One who is the Word - Eze 28:14 *"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. 15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.*

And when the restoration of the heavens and earth ruined by the rebellion of the 'anointed cherub' takes place all creative acts in this respect are again through the Word – Ge 1:21 *So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and*

every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.....27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Ge 2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. 4 ¶ This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

And when another entity is created for the purpose of rulership it can only happen through the Word - Isa 43:1 ¶ But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

And when there is another new creation, created to receive that rejected by the old creation in Jacob - 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

It can only happen one way – Through the Word. And then yet future, following the Millennial Kingdom - Isa 65:17 ¶ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

And how will this be accomplished? Through the Word, because 'All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.' Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him [Lit. 'For in connection with Him] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. [And in connection with Him all things have been brought together]

'All things' created then have been created in connection with, through and with respect to the Word who is God, who has no beginning and no end and 'all things' were brought together in time past and continue that way during present time.

h). Imagine then what it would mean for the Jews to realize that this is the One whom they crucified. And it is the very fact of the Deity of Jesus the Christ, the Word made flesh that the Holy Spirit through John establishes at the beginning of John's Gospel.

i). And then from our own perspective as we may grasp the enormity of that which we have just looked at, this is the same Jesus who died and shed His blood for us that we might have eternal life, the blood of God who is without beginning and without end, who now offers us the opportunity to be a joint heir with Him so as to know that which is really life in the age to come - Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

The same One who is the Word made flesh into whose image we have the privilege to choose to be transformed - Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 ¶ Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

But there is only one way that we can accomplish this - Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

j). Joh 1:4 *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 ¶ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [overcome] it.*

Ps 119:105 ¶ NUN. *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

We will pick this up again next time – if the Lord is willing.

