



"He who obeys sincerely endeavors to obey thoroughly."
—Thomas Brooks

26-Feb-16

The Signs of God (Part Three)

As we have seen in Parts One and Two, [God](#) is serious about the signs He has given to His people ([Numbers 14:11](#), 22-23). Obedience to His instructions is a general sign ([Deuteronomy 11:18](#)), and within obedience to His instruction is the extremely significant sign of the [Sabbath](#) ([Exodus 31:13](#), 17; [Ezekiel 20:12](#)).

A few other appointed times also contain signs. In [Exodus 12:13](#), the blood of the [Passover](#) lamb is designated as a sign—a sign of salvation. For the children of Israel, it symbolized their salvation from God's wrath. We, too, must come under the blood of the Passover Lamb, not by smearing it on doorposts, but through accepting it as the means of spiritual salvation and then living our lives under obligation—another aspect of obedience. If we trample that blood underfoot—if we despise that sign—then we have nothing with which to pay for our sins, and our lives become forfeit, eternally. It is a sign with extensive ramifications.

The [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#) contains another sign. In [Exodus 13:6-10](#), God says that eating unleavened bread for seven days, along with abstaining

from leavening, is "a sign on your hand" (verse 9). This sign is given, God says, so that His law will be in our mouths. In this case, the sign is in the *doing*, but it results in our speaking or teaching God's law.

In addition, this sign memorializes God's deliverance—His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, as well as His deliverance of us from the powers of darkness. If we shrug off this sign, though, God's instructions leave our mouths. If we diminish its importance, then we despise God's deliverance and risk being ensnared again by [sin](#), [Satan](#), and [the world](#).

God gives signs for good reasons, and it is no wonder that He equates belittling His signs with rejecting Him. Yet, this is exactly what mainstream Christianity has done. The early Catholic Church rejected the sign of the seventh-day Sabbath, substituting [Sunday-worship](#) in its place. The Catholic Church readily admits to doing this—claiming that it has the authority—and Protestantism has continued to nod to the papacy by venerating this manmade tradition.

In addition, while the New Testament is crystal clear that [Jesus Christ](#), the disciples, apostles, and early church kept the signs of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, mainstream Christianity has belittled these appointed times. It has instead appropriated the pagan Saturnalia as a hideous tribute to the Savior's birth and the pagan [Easter](#) as an absurd attempt to honor His resurrection. Ironically, the sign that Jesus gave to the "evil and adulterous generation" of His day was the sign of Jonah—that He would be in the grave for three days and three nights—which directly contradicts the Good Friday/Easter Sunday tradition. Like the first-century Jews, countless professing Christians in the two millennia since then have made the commandment of God of no effect by these traditions (see [Matthew 15:6](#)).

Even among those who observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the sign is being undermined in some quarters. Some claim that we do not have to eat unleavened bread each day for seven days. They allege that we should do our best, but it is not a sin if we do not. Yet, when we recall Who the unleavened bread represents, and our great spiritual need to ingest *Him* each day, it begs the question of how much we in the church are trembling at the Word of God ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

When we take heed to God's Word and bind it to our hands, it is an incredibly positive sign. But if, through rebellion or neglect, we tune out God's instructions, then His Word becomes a testimony *against* us, and His curses become a new sign. In [Deuteronomy 28:45-46](#), God declares:

Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. And they shall be upon you *for a sign and a wonder*, and on your descendants forever. (Emphasis ours.)

The [nations of Israel](#) and Judah rejected God's Word anciently, and all these curses became a sign upon them. Now the iniquity of these nations is becoming full once again. When it does, God will replace His blessings with curses, exchanging the signs that have been despised with a sign of defeat and shame.

Notice, though, that it is called "a sign and a wonder." This sign is accompanied by something conspicuous and miraculous—something that causes astonishment and terror. Ancient Egypt was the dominant power of its day, but God's signs and wonders left that empire in ruins. Because they have shown that they will not obey His voice, He will do the same thing against His own people. If God is against us, then who can be for us?

The signs of God prove even more significant for spiritual Israel, because to whom much is given, from him much will be required ([Luke 12:48](#)). They are a critical part of what He is doing with His people, and when we keep them as an integral part of our thinking, they propel us toward the highest goal. But if ignored or despised, they can also become judgments against us, as Israel and Judah have experienced and are beginning to experience again.

Sometimes God's signs are miraculous occurrences, and we tend to look for them as indicators of God's will. Yet, as we have seen, what God instructs us to do can also serve as signs, and they must remain at the forefront of our minds. God's signs are essential blessings that we must never take for granted.

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Why We Observe Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

We keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, not just as a memorial of the Passover and Exodus event, but because of what the Lord did to bring us out of sin (typified by Egypt). What God does sets everything in motion, significantly eclipsing what we are required to do. God continually does battle for us, breaking down the resistance of Satan (typified by Pharaoh). While God compels us to make choices, He is with us all the way, leading us out of our abject slavery to sin into freedom and eternal life. It is God's calling that makes a difference; no one ever volunteers to follow Him. All that God did to get physical Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land served as a type of what God does for us, calling us out of this world into the Kingdom of God. God is sovereign, necessitating that we diligently seek Him in order to be like Him, yielding to His sanctification, getting rid of all our false gods, worshipping Him in spirit and truth. As a branch attached or grafted to a vine, we cannot do anything without Jesus Christ, who alone enables us to produce or bear fruit through God's Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and Christ's own Spirit dwelling in us. God is exclusively the God of His people and no one else.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Remaining Unleavened](#)

by John O. Reid

We have a tendency to put matters behind us once we are finished with them, but we cannot afford to do this with the lessons we learn from the Days of Unleavened Bread. John Reid shows that those lessons are eternal!

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