

Shemot (Names)
Exodus 1:1-6:1

We begin the book of Exodus with what appears to be a positive picture of the children of Israel. We will not get far into the book however before things begin to deteriorate and the Israelites are in need of deliverance. For the next few weeks we will be looking at everything that יהוה did to accomplish the release of His people from the hand of Pharaoh.

Exodus 1:7 But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and **the land was filled with them.**

Does this verse indicate that many of the Israelites had left the area of Goshen and **filled the entire land**? Had many separated from the family and become something other than **shepherds** – **the occupation that had identified them when they came into Egypt**? Had success and wealth clouded who they really were?

Genesis 47:3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What *is* your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants *are* **shepherds, both we and also our fathers.**"

And if wealth and success weren't enough to keep them from their positions as **shepherds**, the new Pharaoh who felt threatened by them gave them a new **occupation**, a far cry from being **shepherds**:

Exodus 1:11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And **they built for Pharaoh supply cities**, Pithom and Raamses.

According to The Sacred Bridge (Rainey and Notley), the city of Raamses had temples to several gods; in particular Ra (sun god) and Seth (the god of the dust of the earth). The shepherd Israelites were now **building** something dedicated to another deity, not unlike exiled Israelites today unknowingly serving the sun god by honoring and setting apart its day. Hmmm....

Moses did not include in the Torah all the details of his childhood in which he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). Instead, we catch up with him in his adult life when he again identifies with his heritage by killing an Egyptian man who has struck one of his Hebrew brothers. The next thing we know he has fled to Midian and we will pick up his story from there.

Exodus 2:15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a **well**.

Now a **well** is a great place for a Hebrew to come to. A **well** is sometimes interpreted from the Hebrew word ayin (אֵין), which means "to see". In this verse it comes from the Hebrew be'er (בְּעַר), which also means "to make plain", "distinct", "to make clear", or "to declare". It's not hard to imagine that Moses was desperately looking for some direction from the Almighty at this point. The land of Midian would also be where he would learn the invaluable occupation of

being a **shepherd**. This was far from what he knew to this point. Remember he had grown up in the household of the Pharaoh. **Shepherds** were an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34).

Moses is about to get his first “**shepherd**” lesson.

Exodus 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had **seven** daughters. And they came and drew **water**, and **they filled the troughs to water their father's flock**.¹⁷ Then the **shepherds** came and drove them away; but **Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock**.

The **seven** daughters were **shepherdesses** and attempting to **water their father's flock**. They had filled the troughs with clean, clear **water**, but evil shepherds had driven them away. What they would have been left with is stirred up, muddied water for their flocks. הַיְהוָה made it clear how He feels about **shepherds** who muddy the water for **His flock** in Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 34:18 "Is it too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture -- and to have drunk of the **clear waters**, that **you must foul the residue with your feet**?¹⁹ "And *as for My flock*, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."

We read that Moses rose and came to the rescue. In fact what we read in Exodus 2:17 is that Moses:

- **Stood up**
- **Helped**
- **Watered**

The Hebrew word for **stood up** is qum (קָם) and it is interpreted as “**resurrected**” in the Apostolic Scriptures. **Helped** (עָשָׂה) comes from the same root as **Yeshua**. And he **waters** the flock. Wow! Moses responds pretty well to his first lesson at **shepherding**, don't you think?

Just one more thing here. There were **seven** daughters who come to this well. Seven, that's the Hebrew word **Sheva**. Remember the word for well is **Be'er**. Put them together...**Be'er Sheva**. Now obviously this is a different place, but **Be'er Sheva** was a **well** where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob each had a personal encounter with the Almighty. Did Moses make these connections?

The girls return to their father, **Reuel**, whose name means “**friend of El**”. **Friend of El** was a very special title. Moses' father-in-law is referred to by more than one name. Because names mean things, there is a clue here for us that Reuel knew the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is not a stretch since he descended from Keturah, a wife of Abraham.

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "**Abraham** believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called **the friend of God**.

I think that the Almighty had made it very plain to Moses that he was in the right place, don't you? Now it was very appropriate that Reuel would have Moses join them to eat **bread**.

1 Corinthians 10:17 For we, *though* many, are **one bread** and one body; for **we all partake of that one bread**.

The Scripture now takes a little detour to tell you of the situation in Egypt. The Israelites are groaning under their bondage. **Adversity often brings unity**. Their cry goes up to Elohim who **remembers** his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. יהוה will again begin to act on their behalf after adversity has united them. And how does He do that? The answer is found in Chapter 3 with Moses who has settled into the life of a **shepherd**....

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of **Jethro** his father-in-law, the priest of **Midian**. And he **led the flock** to the **back** of the **wilderness**, and came to **Horeb**, the **mountain of Elohim**.

Let's list a few things that we see in this verse:

- Moses led the **flock** to the **wilderness** (bemidbar - בְּמִדְבָּר) – means “place of the **Word**” (דְּבַר)
- **Midian** means “**strife**”
- Root of **Jethro** (יֶתְרוֹ) can mean “**remnant**”
- “the **back**” – the word achar (אַחַר) which can also mean “latter time”
- The etymological root of **Horeb** is to be “dried up” or “parched”
- **Horeb** is Mt. Sinai...which according to Galatians 4:25 is in Arabia (not in the Egyptian Peninsula). This is consistent with where the Midianites lived.

Let's summarize this verse. **Moses**, the **shepherd**, takes the “**flock**” of the “**remnant**” to “**Mt. Sinai**”, which is the “**place of the Word**” in the “**latter times**”, a time of “**strife**”. When you consider that Yeshua was said to be a “prophet like Moses”, and later Mt. Sinai was the location of the giving of the Torah...well you can just see **Yeshua, our Shepherd leading a remnant to the Torah in the end times**, right? The location is dried up and parched...badly in need of the **water** of the **Word**. But the **Word** is just EXACTLY what the Father gives us in this place! Baruch HaShem! And soon in Exodus, Moses the Shepherd will lead ALL of Israel to the mountain for the Word of Torah. Sound familiar? There is another mountain in our future that ALL nations will come to hear the Torah of יהוה:

Isaiah 2:2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *that* the mountain of יהוה's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of יהוה, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For **out of Zion shall go forth the Torah**, and the **Word of יהוה from Jerusalem**.

Now, we'll have to skip over some very important details for the sake of keeping this from turning into a book, but יהוה is bringing about the **deliverance** of the children of Israel through the **obedience of Moses**. And how about us? Since Moses and Torah are nearly synonymous terms in the Apostolic Scriptures, could we say that our **deliverance** will come about through our **obedience of Torah**?

Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to Elohim, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?"

Just like Jacob, Moses wanted to know His Name. Moses, being raised in Egypt, knew that one's name also represented his attributes and strengths. Remember that the Israelites were busy building in the cities of Ra and Seth. But there were many other gods in Egypt...the god of the Nile, Isis the fertility goddess, Beelzebub the prince of the power of the air, and on and on. Knowing the "name" of Elohim would be important to validate the message Moses was bringing to the children of Israel.

Exodus 3:14 And Elohim said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**". And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

What a great answer! It's really hard to define this Hebrew phrase (ehyeh asher ehyeh - אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה). It's probably more accurately translated as "**I will be what I will be.**" It's in the imperfect tense which means it can also be translated something like "**I will continue to be what I already am**" or "**I can continue to be whatever I need to be.**" He's not boxed in like the other gods. He's not just the god of the river, or the god of the sun. This phrase reveals that His attributes are limitless. All of these attributes are in the formal name that he wants to be addressed as and that is יהוה.

Exodus 3:15 Moreover Elohim said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'יהוה Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you. **This is My name forever**, and this *is* My memorial to all **generations**.'

Many **generations** have forgotten His Name, and I do not want to get into the discussion of how it is translated, if we should say it at all, or if we should even write it; but it was the knowledge of His true Name that would be essential in delivering them from Egypt. I think that has relevance for us today.

Okay, let's march on to chapter 4 where we will focus on "**signs**". The Hebrew word for sign is owt (אוֹת). Many of you are probably familiar with the **א** being the **sign** of Messiah, as when Yeshua said He was the "alpha and the omega". Now I think he would have said that in Hebrew, don't you? So He would have said he was the aleph (**א**) and the tav (**ת**). Thus we find the **א** in so many places throughout the Hebrew Scriptures where we can make a Messianic connection. Our focus right now, however, is on the word for **sign** - אוֹת. This word is like the aleph tav

(מס), but with the vav (ו) in between. The vav is a picture of a nail...thus we have the picture of the **Messiah** and the **nail** as the “**sign**”.

יהוה is about to give Moses a few “**signs**” that will help him with his credibility with the children of Israel:

Exodus 4:1 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'יהוה has not appeared to you.' " ² So יהוה said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?" He said, "A **staff**."

More **shepherd** training here. Of course Moses is holding a **staff** in his hand. He is a **shepherd**! A **shepherd's staff** usually had significant events from his whole life carved into it. His staff was like his identity. He could see from the details of his past etched into his staff that יהוה had been training him for this very important mission. Now the Hebrew word for **staff** also means **tribe**. יהוה was **putting the tribes of Israel into Moses' hand to shepherd!**

These are the **signs** given to Moses that the Israelites might believe that Moses had been sent by יהוה to bring about their deliverance from Egypt:

- **Staff** becoming a snake
- **Hand** becoming leperous
- **Water** from the Nile becoming blood.

What was it about these **signs** that would have had an impact on the Israelites? Why would they have connected these particular events with the promises made in the covenant Elohim made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Do they point to the Messiah as the word “**sign**” implies? Let's take a look at them one at a time.

Staff becoming a snake

Exodus 4:3 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 יהוה 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 **staff** in his hand), ⁵ "that they may believe that יהוה Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has appeared to you."

We read in Exodus 3:16 that it is the **elders** who Moses will be approaching with the **signs** that יהוה had given him to convince the people that they will be delivered from Egypt. It is the elders, those most likely to still have an understanding of the **covenant**, who will in turn take this message to the people and convince them of the validity of the claim. What is it that the elders will understand from this 1st **sign**?

The **serpent** was the official Egyptian symbol for royal power and authority, both religious and civil. Pharaohs usually wore a golden serpent **symbol** on their heads...this was actually a representation of the cobra-goddess of Lower Egypt. So what was the **sign**? Moses, with the

power of יהוה, was going to overcome Egypt! Of course, they'd also be thinking of satan who had disguised himself as a **serpent** in the Garden of Eden. It was extremely dangerous to grab a snake by its tail. Usually one would grab a snake just behind its head so it wouldn't bite him. But by trusting יהוה, this simple **shepherd** would bring about a great deliverance for the **tribes** of Israel.

Hand becoming leprous

Exodus 4:6 Furthermore יהוה 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.

Leprosy is actually a very bad translation for the word tzara'at. We're not real sure what the skin disease was, but the Hebrews considered it as an outward sign of the infected person's inward spiritual condition. In other words, the person was seen as being disciplined or cursed by Elohim. Let's try to put ourselves in the Israelite's position a moment. They probably felt like they were the diseased hand....like they had been cursed. They had been polluted by Egyptian culture and Egyptian religion. But there was hope. When Moses pulled his hand out of his bosom....out of his **side**, verse 7 says that it was restored "like his flesh".... "flesh of my flesh"...sound familiar? Eve, the perfect bride...could restoration like that be possible? I think they may have found hope in the picture of the restored hand.

Water from Nile becoming blood

Exodus 4:9 "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**."

This is the final sign and somehow I think it must have been the grand finale. What was the significance of the river Nile? The Egyptian god of the Nile was Hapi, and statues depict it as a breasted, pregnant male that guarded the source of the river. The river was looked at by the Egyptians as **life**. But this was the river that the Israelite baby boys had been thrown into. The Israelites saw it as the river of **death**. Can you imagine having your baby boy ripped out of your arms and thrown into the river? I think when the elders saw the **water** from the river being poured onto the **dry** ground, they saw the **blood** of the **innocent**. They saw an Elohim who cared. An Elohim that was teaching them that the **life is in the blood**. That he provides for the **dry** and thirsty. Again, I think they saw that deliverance would come through Moses whose name means "**drawn out**" and **who was "drawn out" of this river of death to give them the hope of life!** There would be many more lessons to come concerning the "**blood of the innocent**".

Let's take one more look at verse 8:

Exodus 4:8 "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the **voice** of the first **sign**, that they may believe the **voice** of the latter **sign**."

It is no coincidence that יהוה says that these **signs have “voices”**. **They speak...they testify...they tell the story of the plan of the Almighty.** Shabbat and circumcision are both called “**signs**”. They have loud **voices**. They are a witness of who you belong to.

Remember what happened when Cain killed Abel?

Genesis 4:9 Then יהוה said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"¹⁰ And He said, "What have you done? **The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.**

This is the **voice of another innocent who was killed...another “sign,” another voice** that speaks of the **Messiah**.

What I want you to remember from this commentary is that יהוה's teaching has always been that He will do His work through **shepherds**. Ultimately, we know Yeshua to be **the Great Shepherd**. A **shepherd** is one who leads the sheep. The Bible teaches that it must be The **Word** that is fed to the sheep. If you are leading others to the **Word**, then you are a **shepherd**.

The other thought is that יהוה provides His **shepherds** with **signs** to validate their words. These **signs** always point to the work of the Messiah. They are **voices** that sometimes speak louder than words. Ultimately the world will witness the **sign** of the coming of the Messiah:

Matthew 24:30 "Then the **sign** of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the **tribes** of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Until then however, we must continue the work of Messiah and He will confirm His words:

Mark 16:20 And they went out and preached everywhere, Adonai working with *them* and **confirming the word through the accompanying signs**. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,
Ardelle