

98-02-01a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me for our Scripture reading to Psalm 50. Psalm 50. The context of our current study in Genesis is at the beginning of chapter 4, the story of Cain and Abel.

We have seen their birth. They have grown to adulthood and have taken up occupations. Cain is a farmer, a tiller of the soil.

Abel is a shepherd. There is significance in the choice of occupation. Certainly nothing wrong with farming.

But in the context of our historical events in Genesis that we have seen thus far, God, in chapter 3 toward the end, has just cursed the earth and has indicated that laboring and tilling the soil is a reflection of the Fall, and a reflection of the loss of privilege and the loss of fellowship, the presence of God, and so forth, in the garden.

And Cain is now, by profession and by occupation, associated with that which God has just cursed. He is a tiller of the soil. And of course, with our hindsight, from our perspective here in the Church Age, when we see Abel as a shepherd, all of the significance of the shepherd throughout Scripture, and the sheep, it begins to resonate with added meaning when we see the choice of occupation.

But we have reached the point in Genesis chapter 4 where these two men approach God with a sacrifice. And that sacrifice, that minchah offering, is not designed for atonement. It's not designed for propitiation.

It is a free will offering and is not necessarily to be a blood sacrifice. I read to you from the venerable commentary last week, Keil and Delitzsch, and C. F. Keil is careful to point out that the unacceptability of Cain's offering is not related to the fact that it is bloodless, and that Abel's is a blood sacrifice.

Checked several other commentaries this week, such as the King James Study Bible, and so forth, and they are almost unanimous in pointing this out. It's kind of surprising to me that it seems like, at least in my church background, I have heard that so many times, that the reason God was not happy with Cain's sacrifice is that it didn't involve blood sacrifice. Virtually every commentary that I checked this past week is careful to indicate that that is not the reason, that it is the attitude of heart with which it's offered.

That brings us to our Scripture reading this morning here in Psalm 50. This is a psalm of Asaph.

The Mighty One, God the Lord, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth. Our God shall come and shall not keep silent. A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is a judge.

Hear, O My people, and I will speak. O Israel, and I will testify against you. I am God, your God.

I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me. I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

But to the wicked, God says, "What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction, and cast My words behind you? When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit.

"You sit and speak against your brother. You slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent. You thought that I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes.

“Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoever offers praise glorifies Me. And to him who orders his conduct aright, I will show the salvation of God.”

This psalm reflects, as so many passages in the Old Testament, God's desire, what God is really looking for from His people. And it isn't the superficial performance of sacrifice. It is attitude of heart.

It is a positive attitude, and a seeking after the truth of God in His Word. We have no right to claim the promises of God when we are disobedient. God says in verse 16, “What right do you have to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing that you hate instruction, and cast My words behind you?” This is what we find in Genesis chapter 4 with Cain.

We've seen that even the author of Hebrews, in Hebrews 11:4, says that Abel offers a more acceptable sacrifice, or offers an acceptable sacrifice, and is acceptable in the sight of God because of his faith.

Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man, the sign of Yahweh.” Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. In the process of time it came to pass, or after a year, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock, and of their fat.

And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

So the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin crouches at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

There is a lot of wonderful artistry in the Word of God. God has not only communicated divine truth to us, but He has done it in the highest expressions that mankind can use, in literature, the techniques, and the beauty in the Bible.

It's one of the reasons we have these courses, the Bible as Literature. Even people who don't really believe that the Bible communicates divine truth, or that it's the inspired Word of God, recognize the artistry and the beauty with which the Word of God has been constructed. And these are not only a reflection of the glory of God, and the beauty of the things of God, but they also serve a purpose.

We saw, for example, in Genesis chapter 3, actually beginning in 2:25, when it says they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. And that word is arum, and then there's a play on words, beginning with that verse and going through chapter 3, where the serpent is more cunning, or arum. It's the same form, different meaning.

But that play between nakedness, and you come down after the partaking of the fruit, and the man and the woman know that they are naked. The reason Adam hides in the garden, he tells God, is because he knows that he is arum, that he is naked. And so that word and that word play tie that scene together in the garden, and enable us to identify an important theme in that story.

It's narrative, but the tools of narrative and the artistry of the narrative enhance our ability to understand and to interpret that passage. The same thing is taking place here in chapter 4, and it's unfortunate, I think, that this has been obscured.

As we saw when we studied chapter 4, verse 1, Eve's statement when she gives birth to the first child in the human race, and she says, “I have acquired,” which is the Hebrew verb kana, Q-A-N-A-H, and she does a word play on Cain's name. Cain is closely related to kana as far as its vocalization and construction and so forth. So she says, “I have acquired an ish, a man.” Here's this little baby, but she calls him a man, an ish.

And of course that takes us back to the terminology used in chapter 2, where God creates the man, and you have ish and isha and so forth, the man and the woman. And then the last phrase in verse 1 is often understood to mean, “I have acquired a man with the Lord,” or “with the Lord's help,” and we studied that in some detail.

It is vocalized in most Hebrew texts as *et Yahweh*, but this is a unique construction. No place else in the Old Testament is that construction used to indicate that something is done with the Lord's help. It's very strange. It's been a puzzle. There's been a lot of interpretive effort spent trying to figure that out.

But some interpreters, including myself, think that the text has been mis-vocalized. You know the original text is consonants only, and someone goes in later and puts in the vowels. Well, instead of putting an E in there to say *et Yahweh*, if you put in the O, you have *ot Yahweh*, the sign of Yahweh. And this is important because we have another inclusion.

This idea of the sign is an important one. It's an important one in Scripture, and it's one we're going to look at this morning. What is the sign of Yahweh?

In this case, if you think about this, there's never been a human birth. As people have been fond of pointing out, it would appear that Adam and Eve didn't have navels. They were not the product of physical birth. No one had ever seen a pregnancy. No one had ever seen a birth.

Even for us, who are the product of thousands of generations down through history, we know what conception and pregnancy and birth involve. And yet, at the point of observing the birth of a child, especially your own child, you realize what an incredible miracle that is. It is one of the most profound mysteries and one of the greatest works of God when He produces a human being from two others, from within the mother's womb.

Eve was the first woman to ever experience that, to ever go through it, to ever see it. And at the point that she gives birth to this son, she recognizes that this is a wonder. This is a miraculous sign from God, and not just Elohim God. This is Yahweh God, God known by His personal name, the name that He uses when He speaks to them in the garden, the name that He is known by.

And, of course, this name of God distinction is something that has been the basis for trying to shred the books of Moses and say that there were several different authors and so forth. But that difference of name is important because there are times when God acts in His capacity as the God of the universe. There are times when God wants to emphasize His personal nature, His personal relationship and fellowship with His people. And it is in those passages and at those times that God is referred to by His personal name, Yahweh.

And that's the name that Eve uses here when she says, "I have acquired a man, the *ot*." This is aleph, which is a guttural in Hebrew, and then pointed with the holam, and then the letter tav, which is the letter T.

And this word occurs fairly often in the Old Testament. We have already seen it in Genesis. The first place where we find—and this, by the way, if you are taking notes, is going to be the doctrine of signs. The doctrine of signs.

The first place we find the word *ot* is in the creation account of Genesis chapter 1. Genesis 1:14: God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons." The word signs there, that's the first use in the Bible of *ot*. Signs and seasons for days and years. "And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth." And it was so.

The luminaries in the heavens serve a dual purpose. They are for signs and for seasons. They remind us of the fact that there is a Creator who has created the universe, and He has organized it. There is a plan. There is a cycle to the forward progress of the universe, of time itself. It is cyclical. It can be measured. It can be understood because God has organized it.

And the luminaries are the primary. Every culture that has ever existed, when they get around to figuring out how to count time, have looked to the heavens. They recognize that there is a lunar cycle that repeats itself. You have a new moon and a quarter moon, half moon, three-quarter moon. You have the gibbous moon that's almost full, and then you have a full moon and so forth. And the cycle of planting and harvest, of months and years and of many other aspects of life, are based on these signs, these luminaries that God has placed in the heavens.

There are different ways you could look at signs. I have divided them into two broad categories. These are the lasting signs or corporate signs. These are signs that speak over a long period of time to a large number of people.

There is a sense in which these overlap because any sign that's recorded in the Bible speaks over a long period of time to a lot of people. But this is more of a corporate. The luminaries weren't just for Adam's benefit. They weren't designed to help Noah out of a bind. They are sort of a universal sign. They have a larger purpose.

And so that is the first of the lasting corporate category of signs in Genesis 1:14. We're going to find when we get to Genesis 9:12-17, as soon as you hear that chapter number in Genesis, Genesis 9 is of course the flood chapter. So we would expect to be talking about the rainbow in Genesis 9.

And of course God says in Genesis 9:11, "I establish My covenant with you. Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood. Never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you."

What category of sign is this going to be? This is one of our long-lasting corporate type of signs. "I set My rainbow in the cloud and it shall be for a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be when I bring a cloud over the earth that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh. The waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."

It's interesting because we have here for the first time the idea that this sign is not just presented as something to remind man of the covenant. God says the rainbow is going to be in the cloud and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature. God says this is going to be a sign to Him as well as to us.

And of course we grapple with the omniscience and the incredible infinitude of God. He obviously doesn't need to tie a string around His finger to remember what He has said, but He presents it in that way to us. He says you can have confidence when you see the rainbow that I am remembering My covenant, that I am looking at it and seeing the same significance in it that you do. It is a sign. It is a testimony.

The word of itself is translated variously as sign, pledge, token, omen. It is sometimes an attestation of divine presence. It indicates that God is involved. This shall be a sign unto you that what is happening is of God.

In Genesis chapter 17 we find circumcision established as an ot, as a sign of God's covenant. Almost identical language to that found in Genesis 9. Genesis 17, verse 11: "You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised."

Every male child in your generations. He who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. Interesting foreshadowing there of the possibility of Gentile salvation and inclusion in God's covenant promises in the Old Testament age.

At the very inception when God establishes the sign of circumcision, He says other people besides your descendants can participate in this covenant. "He who is born in your house," verse 13, "he who is bought with your money must be circumcised and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."

Once again this is under our category of lasting signs. This is referred to again in Romans chapter 4, verse 11, where Paul reminds his audience that circumcision was a sign of God's covenant. Romans 4, verse 11, talking about Abraham, he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.

So it's a sign of God's covenant, God's honoring of faith in His people. Our fourth example of a lasting or corporate sign, and this is one of the most important and most often referred to uses of sign in the Old Testament, these are the miracle signs performed when Israel is delivered from bondage in Egypt. Look, for example, at Exodus chapter 4, verses 8 and 9.

When I am doing a categorical study, either listening to one or engaging in one myself, it's right about at this point that I start to ask myself, I'm starting to see a lot of passages and get a lot of points here. I wonder what the point is, what is the purpose? I'm already starting to ask myself the question, so what?

It's interesting to see these signs and to go through the Scriptures and so forth, but is this something that's going to make a difference in my thinking, in my personal application, my walk with the Lord, my forward progress in God's plan, to understand that circumcision was a sign or that the rainbow is a sign?

We are going to see that there is a very important affirmative answer to that question when we have gotten a little further in seeing the way that God uses signs and what they signify. To use the verb form of sign, there is an important aspect and application of this for us, so do not lose heart as we look at these, where it will make sense to us as we go.

Exodus chapter 4, verses 8 and 9. God is calling Moses to lead the people of Israel out of bondage. Moses is not real sure that he is ready, willing, or able to do that, and he begins to express his doubts to God. He says in Exodus 4:1, "Suppose the people will not believe me or listen to my voice. Suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" You're delusional. You've got a chemical imbalance. You've got strange hallucinations.

So the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from it.

So this wasn't just he threw it on the ground and he said, you know, that looks sort of like a serpent. It apparently started writhing around to the point where Moses, having lived many years in the wilderness, ran away. And this was a lively snake, a dangerous-looking snake from which Moses held his—Moses, at this point, he's pushing 80. He's been around a long time. He was 40 when he left Egypt. He spent 40 years in Midian. God's sending him back to Egypt at this point. He's had a lot of experience in the desert. He's been chasing goats for 40 years in Midian. And when he sees this snake, he flees.

The Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." What do we call the mental process by which you go forward in the face of danger at God's command? It starts with F and ends with A-I-T-H. It takes faith.

When you see something that scares you and makes you run away, and God says, "Turn around, go forward and seize it by the tail," this is a little exercise in faith. This is Moses' little practical exam, little practical exercise in faith. It's going to take faith on a much grander and more visible scale. This is just the Lord and Moses. Very soon, Moses' faith will be put to the test in a much grander arena.

But this isn't just a little parlor trick that God is showing Moses how to work so that he can impress people. This is exercising Moses' faith. One of the things that we do have illustrated for us in the Scriptures by way of personal application is that when a crisis comes and when we are in doubt on large issues in our life, many times there will be some small, seemingly unrelated area of life in which God will start to get our faith apparatus working.

When we're in doubt, when we're confused, when we're disturbed and unsettled and troubled of mind, and we're going to the Lord and we want to please God in this situation, we're not just self-absorbed and self-pitying. There are times when we know we want to please the Lord but we don't seem to have the ability, and we seem clouded with doubt and uncertain. And there's a lot of troubled, restless nights and so forth.

One of the things that God will do is the thing that He does for Moses here. In an unrelated area, playing with snakes has nothing to do on the surface with leading the people out of Egypt. It has nothing to do with facing Pharaoh. It's an immediate practical test, but this gets Moses back to doing what he knows how to do, which is to hear the Word of the Lord and trust it.

This is why it's so important to pay attention to the little things in life. He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much. And we tend to think, well, my real problem is over here. I'm trying to find an answer to this real big problem. And we sometimes overlook the fact that God is giving us the answer, and giving us the condition of soul and the peace of mind and the strength through His Word and His Spirit, by working in a completely different area in our lives through some relatively small, seemingly unimportant detail in our lives.

And by focusing on the one that's easy to solve and easy to see, we get the apparatus in our soul functioning according to God's will and under God's power. And when we turn our attention back to the large issue, we find it's the same faith. It's the same process. What works in the small situation works in the large.

So it is an encouragement we have to, under pressure, remember to pay attention to the little things in life. And many times God gives us the answers to big things in those snake-catching exercises.

So Moses seizes the snake by the tail. He reached out his hand and caught it, and as soon as he did, the danger evaporated. It became a rod again. “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.”

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. Another extremely frightening experience.

Now, what do we know about leprosy? Especially this leprosy in the Old Testament. What was everyone's first instinct when it comes to leprosy? If you saw a leprous sore on someone, did you approach and hug that person? Did you immediately reach out and make contact with the leprous flesh? Not at all.

From long before the time of the law of Moses, when you see leprosy, you flee. You get away from it. You avoid it. The most rudimentary instinctive reflex is, I don't want to touch that. I don't want to contact that. It's unclean. It's a living death.

Moses pulls out his hand, and it's like these special-effects horror movies with all the latex and the dripping goo and so forth. He brings out his hand and it's this grotesque, leprous, rotting flesh, flesh-falling-from-the-bone hand. It's gruesome. He pulls it out and he's immediately shocked.

What does God say? If Moses could run away from his own hand at that point, like he did from the snake, he would do so. But God says, “Take that gruesome, diseased, rotting hand and stick it back inside your clothing, back next to your body.” What does this do? It's another exercise in faith.

Do you trust the evidence of your senses? Or do you trust God's Word? God's command is, “Put it back inside your bosom.” And once again, Moses gets an exercise. He gets practice. God is starting up, He's priming the pump in the soul of, hear the Word of God, respond to the Word of God with faith.

And Moses does so. Moses succeeds in these small tests. He seizes the dangerous snake by the tail. He puts his hand back into his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.

Then it will be, in verse 8, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign—that's ot—they may believe the message of the latter sign, ot. These miraculous signs in Moses' experience—Moses is going to cast down the rod.

And you know how it is, even when you're watching something in the movies, and if you stop and think, you realize it's actors and everything is safe and there's really a net below the falling man and so forth. We get into such a sense of empathy with what we see in a story or what we see before us.

I remember the one and only time I went to a circus when I was a small boy. We had some neighbors we were good friends with. He was the assistant pastor of our church, and I was friends with his sons. And I went with them to the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus. Never been there before.

And I don't remember too much about it. I was pretty young. I remember that in all the circuses I had seen on TV, I had no idea of the way a circus smells. A circus, at least that circus, I don't know if maybe we were sitting close to the elephant cages or what, but a circus has a very pungent animal smell, at least in my recollection.

The other thing is, it's the first time I had seen people swinging on trapezes on TV, but I had never seen it in real life. And I was amazed at how high those swings were. And these poles in the tent, you've got these people up there, and these little tiny girls in tights and things, and they grab a hold of this thing, and they swing out, and just the three-dimensional realization that if she lost her grip, it would be a very—

And this is why circuses have been popular: to see people sticking their heads in the lion's mouth, and going into the tiger cage, and swinging and doing these dangerous things. It is an experience for the audience. They're not personally, hopefully, in any danger themselves, but your sense of empathy with the person who is in danger and is taking these incredible or seemingly incredible risks is very strong.

And God says to Moses, these things that I've just given you practice in here, you are going to do these before the people. And they're going to be like the audience at the circus. They're going to see you. God's not going to make them all go chase a snake and grab it by the tail. God is not going to have them all turn leprous and have them stick their hand in their bosom. They are going to watch you.

This is spiritual leadership. This is what the apostles were called to. This is what the great prophets and men of old were called to: is by demonstrating faith and by illustrating God's honoring of faith and response to obedient faith, this encourages people to begin to exercise their own faith.

And this is Moses' call. These are signs. These are *ot*. They communicate something about God. They are a stimulus, or together these two are stimuli, to faith. They're supposed to evoke faith, to produce faith, to encourage faith, to encourage focusing on God and His power and His plan in the face of fear.

Why is there a rainbow in the sky? So that when the rains fall and when the floods come and when your house is washed away, you're reminded there's a God in heaven who has promised that the world is not going to be utterly destroyed. It always turns our attention back to God.

So the signs that begin here with these relatively small demonstrations of God's power with the snake and with leprosy—of course there's a lot of significance there. When we talked about the serpent in Genesis chapter 2, the rods turning to serpents and God's complete power over this whole serpent existence here is a reminder that the serpent, by deceiving mankind into sin, has not won the victory. God is greater than the serpent. God can do what He wants to with the serpent. And this whole serpent idea is a motif all the way through the bronze serpent and so forth.

But in chapter 4, verse 17 here, “You shall take this rod in your hands, with which you shall do the signs,” these *ot*, in front of the people of Israel. And again down in verse 28 and in verse 30, Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord which He had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses, and then he did the signs in the sight of the people.

And look at verse 31. So the people believed, and when they heard the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped. That should be the result of seeing a sign: faith and worship.

God is going to multiply His signs in Egypt. The ten plagues are going to be signs. In Exodus chapter 7 and verse 3, Exodus chapter 8 and verse 23, Exodus 10:1 and 2—again, that's Exodus 7:3, 8:23, and 10:1 and 2—God multiplies signs in Egypt so that they will know that He is the Lord. And He explicitly states that in Exodus chapter 10 and verse 2.

Now, this, we understand the significance of this as far as the Exodus and God leading His children out of bondage and so forth. But this is something that God identifies Himself with throughout His history with Israel in the Old Testament. There are at least 16 references in the Old Testament back, “I am the God who led you out of Egypt with signs and wonders,” where the word *ot* is specifically used.

There are dozens of times when God identifies Himself as the God of deliverance, the God who led them out of Egypt, but some 16 times that I counted in a quick scan, God mentions these signs that accompanied their deliverance.

Just one example of this: if you look at Jeremiah chapter 32, out of these 16, this is a typical passage. Jeremiah chapter 32, beginning at verse 20: “Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still. Therefore My heart yearns for him. I will surely have mercy on him,” says the Lord.

“Set up signposts. Make landmarks. Set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went. Turn back, O virgin Israel. Turn back to these your cities. How long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth: a woman shall encompass a man.” That's a wonderful study in and of itself.

“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities when I bring back their captivity: ‘The Lord bless you, O home of justice and mountain of holiness.’ And

there shall dwell in Judah itself and in all its cities together farmers and those going out with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul. I have replenished every sorrowful soul.”

So, God identifies Himself as the God who delivered them. If you look down at verse 32, “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, even though I was a husband to them.” Then He goes on to give the details of the new covenant.

But this is a memorial sign, and it's one of the biggest ones. It's one of the reasons that we are justified when we talk about interpreting the Old Testament and interpreting the history of Israel. God places so much emphasis on their deliverance from bondage in Egypt, deliverance through redemption, deliverance through the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, and that last and greatest sign.

And if you look at the Exodus passages I mentioned to you earlier, especially in chapter 10 and verse 2, where the deliverance of the firstborn is the last and greatest sign under which they will leave bondage, and it's a picture of salvation, as we have reviewed many times. And it's important to remember that these things were written for our instruction, and that the history of Israel and God's dealing with Israel is an illustration of God's dealing with believers.

The feast of unleavened bread is also associated with the Exodus. God said, “For seven days you will not put any leavening in your bread, and this will be a sign.” He says this in Exodus chapter 13, verses 8 and 9, and again in verse 16.

But the seven-day feast of unleavened bread is an *ot*. It is a token, a sign, a memorial reminder. They spend an entire week eating a special kind of bread to remind them of deliverance from Egypt, not to forget the idea involved in redemption.

So we see here that a sign can be a fulfillment of something God has said. Like Eve points out, God said that there would be travail and sorrow in childbirth, and here's Cain. He said that there would be childbirth and that we would bear children in sorrow and so forth, and here's Cain. This is a miracle sign from Yahweh. This is the fulfillment of what God said in Genesis chapter 3.

We also see that it is a reminder, a sign, a token, or symbol of covenant. God's covenant with man is that he will have children and reproduce. His name will not be cut off. His line will not be cut off. And Cain is the first fulfillment of that.

The rainbow is a sign of God's covenant that He won't destroy the earth. Circumcision is a sign of God's covenant that He will honor faith in the line of Abraham and all those who join with Abraham because of their faith. And the sign of God's deliverance of Israel from bondage is a reminder of His faithfulness to Israel, His covenant with Israel.

The seven-day feast is a reminder, a token of God's deliverance. Again, that's Exodus 13:8 and 9, and again in verse 16 of Exodus 13.

Sabbath observance, the weekly Sabbath, is an *ot*, a sign, and this has a specific purpose. Look at Exodus chapter 31, verse 13. Exodus 31, verse 13. This is a reminder. God says, “Speak to the children of Israel: My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign, an *ot*, between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”

And at least three places in the Old Testament, the Sabbath observance sign is said to remind Israel that it is God who sanctifies them. It is God who sets them apart. It is God who cleanses them and qualifies them for fellowship and relationship with Himself.

Ezekiel reminds Israel of this same principle in Ezekiel chapter 20, verses 12 and 20.

Well, this is a good place to take a Shabbat, to take a rest from our study. We'll pause here. When we return, we're going to see that God's Word itself is said to be an *ot*, or a sign. Let's pause and take our break.