

98-02-01b

So we are back now from our break, and during the break we solved several of the world's major problems. Unfortunately, the world's major leaders were not listening, but if they were, we could have gotten some good advice. I'm going to pick up the pace a little bit here on the doctrine of signs.

I am not going to necessarily leave time for someone who's taking a copious set of notes. I will make you this offer, though, if you want a complete set of notes and you're listening on tape, email me and I'll email you my set of notes. It's got all the scriptures and points in it.

But I want to move forward because we want to get to the conclusion and to the application of these things, and we also want to cover a couple of other concepts this morning. These lasting or corporate signs, we've already seen the heavenly luminaries in Genesis 1-14, the rainbow in Genesis 9, circumcision in Genesis 17, Moses and the miracles that accompany God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt in Exodus 4 especially, again in chapter 7, chapter 8, and chapter 10 of Exodus, for the purpose of demonstrating that the God of Israel is the Lord. And that's Exodus 10-2.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a memorial or reminder of God's deliverance on that occasion, Exodus 13. Sabbath observance is another sign to remind Israel that it is the Lord who sanctifies them, Exodus 31, Ezekiel 20. God's statutes, God's commandments, God's word is to be bound as an oat on the hand and as frontlets between the eyes.

Remember that famous passage that resulted in the Israelites wearing phylacteries. Physically, there's no more graphic illustration of Israel's misunderstanding of what God is talking about than phylacteries. Turn with me to Deuteronomy 6, verse 8. We actually begin in verse 4 of Deuteronomy 6. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

You shall bind them as an oat on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. What's the other thing that goes on the doorposts of the house? In Israel, the blood of the Passover lamb, that other sign.

So it shall be when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things which you did not fill, hewn out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant. When you have eaten

and are full, then beware lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God and serve him, and shall take oaths in his name.

You can turn forward to Deuteronomy 11.18 and see a reiteration of this principle. This entire chapter 11 is on the importance of heeding God's word. Verse 13 of Deuteronomy 11, it shall be, If you earnestly obey my commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain your new wine and your oil, and I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them. Lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and he shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you. Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Why bind them on the hand? Why not bind them on your belt? Why not affix them in some other place? Why bind them on the hand? One of the consistent meanings when we talk about hands is that they symbolize that which we do. Remember the blood that was applied to the cleansed leper? The priest was to take the blood mixed with oil and put some on the earlobe, on the thumb, and on the toe. It's a reminder that this is sanctification.

It's a picture of sanctification. The cleansed leper, this newborn person in Israel, is to sanctify what they take in, what they hear. They're to sanctify what they do with their hands, and they're to sanctify their walk.

So there's blood applied to those three areas. To bind the words of God as a sign on one's hand doesn't mean to make a phylactery and put a little scripture note in there and wrap it around, and they got more concerned with how are the leather straps wrapped, and what is the scripture that's inside, and so forth. It is so typical of what happened in Israel to try to turn things into literal obedience rather than spiritual obedience.

God says over and over again, have these things in your hearts. If they had paid a tenth of the attention to their hearts that they paid to their phylacteries and to their doorposts, what a different history we would have in scripture. So these are to be a sign, a memorial reminder, a token.

And when it's on the hands, it means anytime you set out to do something, stop and think about the word of God. Why are you doing what you do? When Israel disobeys,

when they forget the law of the Lord, when they are rebellious and disobedient and apathetic, discipline on the nation is also going to be a sign. And this is still in the category of lasting or corporate signs.

Discipline upon the disobedient nation will serve as a sign forever. Look at Deuteronomy 28.46. Deuteronomy 28 is the description of those things that bring blessing and those things that bring a curse. This, of course, is in the cursing section.

Deuteronomy 28, verse 45. Moreover, all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed. Why? Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

This is discipline on a nation that is assumed to be, is pictured as being, believers. God is their God. The Lord is their Lord.

And they are destroyed not for no faith or no belief in God. They are destroyed for disobedience. Obedience is an issue for believers.

Obedience is not an issue for unbelievers. You are not saved by obedience. But believers are declared righteous by faith.

And that faith works itself out in obedience. Faith has as its object the word of God. When the word of God says to think and to be and to do certain things, to respond to that and to pursue that is obedience.

All of these things will come upon you, pursue you, 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, these curses will be upon you for a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.

Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart for the abundance of everything. Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness and in need of everything. And He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

The consequences for disobedience on the part of believers are severe. The Old Testament nation of Israel coming out of Egypt under the blood is a picture of believers in every age and what God requires. And what God does by way of dealing with His people.

There is great blessing, there is great prosperity, there is great fellowship with God and reflection of God's glory on the positive side. And there are tremendous woes and there is great destruction on the negative side. We seem to have lost that perspective in our modern Christianity.

But this is a sign, it's an oath, it's just like the rainbow or circumcision. The discipline on the nation of Israel is an everlasting sign. It ought to tell us something, it ought to remind us of something just like the rainbow does.

You have an illustration of this in literal terms in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram which is recorded in Numbers chapter 16. You go back a few pages from Deuteronomy to Numbers chapter 16. You remember the issue here and this is an issue in the modern church today.

In Christianity and our Christian environment and experience today. We have currently going on the Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebellion. And it is rampant.

Korah was a son of Ishar in Numbers 16.1. The son of Kohath, the son of Levi. This is extremely important. His lineage is given for a reason.

Korah is a Levite. He is a descendant of Levi. Dathan and Abiram are sons of Eliab and An.

He doesn't get mentioned too much. He must have been a hanger on in the rebellion because he is really only mentioned here. Dathan and Abiram are sons of Eliab and An is the son of Peleth.

Eliab and Peleth are sons of Reuben. We just went through the doctrine of the firstborn last week. What do we know about Reuben? He was chronologically in Israel the firstborn.

Why do you think that Dathan and Abiram and An are jumping into this rebellion against Moses? They are saying, hey, we are from the tribe of Reuben. Reuben is the firstborn. Why are you lording it over us? Why are you assuming the leadership role in Israel when that belongs to Reuben? Korah is saying, I am a Levite.

Here is Moses and Aaron and they are Levites. Why can't all the Levites worship and serve? They rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, 250 leaders. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said, You take too much upon yourselves.

All the congregation is holy. Every one of them. And the Lord is among them.

Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? We are all equal. We are all qualified. There is nothing special about you.

Isn't this what we have today? We have people saying the genders are equal. There is no reason why we shouldn't be ordaining women and having women pastors and women exerting authority in the church. That is an old archaic misunderstood concept in the New Testament when Paul says, I will not suffer a woman have authority.

The woman should be quiet in church. Ask her husband at home. How sexist.

How terrible all of this is. Those people need to go back and read Numbers chapter 16. Is there anything physically wrong with Korah? That he is not good enough? He is not smart enough? He is not beautiful enough? He is not physically perfect enough to serve as a priest? No.

It is God's designation of certain individuals that assigns them their role. And he has not been designated. But he wants the role.

And he says, I am qualified. We are all holy. We are all the assembly of God.

We should all be qualified to do whatever we want to do. So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face. Spoke to Korah.

Says, tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is his. Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is holy. And will cause him to come near.

The one whom he chooses he will cause to come near to him. Do this. Take censers.

Korah and all your company. Put fire in them. Put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow.

It shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the holy one. It is not the one that has no visible defects. It is the one the Lord chooses.

You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi. The story goes forward. You are probably familiar with it.

After they attempt to approach the Lord with their censers. And the earth opens up and swallows them. And the other 250 rebels are consumed with fire.

This is over in verse 31. That the earth splits apart under them. Opens its mouth and swallows them up with their households.

And all the men with Korah. With all their goods. This is what we were talking about on the break.

When you are going to execute somebody. Don't just assassinate the individual. It's their household, their goods.

Everything in their periphery disappears in a great puff of smoke. This is a way to eliminate the leadership of a country that refuses to line up as it should. They and all those with them went alive down into the pit.

The earth closed over them and they perished from among the assembly. Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry. For they said the earth is going to swallow us up

also.

And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering incense. This would be a great movie. I think they have a scene based on this in the Ten Commandments and so forth.

But the special effects guys could have a great time reenacting, recreating this. Because you have the earth cracking open and swallowing up the rebels. It closes over them.

Everyone else starts to run away that's been associated. And fire streaks through the camp and incinerates them. I don't know if this is like laser beams or balls of fire flying through the camp.

But you get the idea that God is making a pretty splashy issue out of getting rid of these people. He could have just had them all quietly lay down and go to sleep and not wake up. They could have walked out of the camp and never returned.

But God, in a very violent and flashy way, explodes these people. Swallows them up into the heart of the earth alive. And makes an issue out of them.

So, what's the point here? Well, we get down. The Lord speaks to Moses in verse 36. Tell Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest, the qualified guy, to pick up the censers out of the blaze.

You get the idea that this is... I remember, did you ever see the movie Bojest, the one with Doug McClure? When I was a small boy, he was on The Virginian. And so then they had this movie Bojest and I saw Doug McClure and it really caught my attention. I was five or six years old.

Anyway, at some point in that movie, and I forget all the details, but the fort gets attacked and burned and a bunch of people get burned. And they had this one very grisly looking, it was grisly to me when I was a boy anyway, where one of these French Foreign Legion types got hit with a flaming cannonball or something. And there's a boot there and part of a leg and then there's smoke coming out.

And there's just bits and pieces of these French Foreign Legion guys. And it's really, it was very shocking to me at the time. Well, this is the way the camp looks now that these 250 people have been incinerated by the Lord.

There's bits and pieces of people with smoke coming up. And the stuff that they had in their hands is now laying around on the ground, these censers that they came and offered before the Lord. The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar.

Because they presented them before the Lord, therefore they are holy, and they shall be

assigned to the children of Israel. Now this is a profoundly important point. One of the most common ways in which modern day efforts and ministries and misguided, unbiblical ministries on TV and on the radio and in books and media and so forth are legitimized is they say, look at the results.

We went over and filled this stadium with all these people and look at the ones that came streaming down the aisles and got saved. This is our legitimacy. God honored our effort and these people have gotten the gospel and got saved.

So we're legitimate. What does this passage say about that? You can be completely in the wrong and you can be sinning against your own soul in what you're doing and there can still be something that was offered to the Lord and is holy. But God will use that as a sign against you.

And to look at a ministry and say, well they must be doing something right because people are getting saved is not a valid application to make. You can be doing every possible thing wrong and at the mention of the word of God, the word of God which carries its own power and its own authority in whatever context, you can write a verse on the bathroom wall and somebody is liable to get saved. That doesn't mean that writing verses on bathroom walls is legitimate or that the person that did it had any inherent righteousness.

It could have been the last part of some seeming joke that somebody was writing on the bathroom wall and that was the only part that survived when the janitor came. You cannot legitimize a ministry or a technique or a procedure or an effort by pointing to results that appear to be good. It appears that people got saved.

It appears that people were ministered to. It appears that some good came forth. You cannot point to that and say, see, we're good.

God is pleased. God can be sending the balls of fire to incinerate you and leave your smoking sandals in the sand and he will pick up the censers and hammer them into plates and hang them on the altar, the place of worship, as a testimony and as a reminder that good things, these censers were brought before the Lord and they became holy at that point but that doesn't mean that these men were not sinning against their souls and doing everything wrong. The earth parted and swallowed them up and I will tell you from the word of God that there are people on TV today claiming to be Christians and claiming to engage in Christian ministry and it would be better for them if the earth cracked under their little glass podium, their plexiglass stage, and swallowed them alive than what's going to happen to them at the judgment seat of Christ.

They and all of those in their periphery, all of those who support them, all of those who follow them, all of those who buy their books and listen to their tapes and support their ministries and tell their friends and go down and fill those stadiums, seven woes upon

those who sin against their souls and lead others astray and they will wish that all they got was what Korah, Dathan and Aviram got. These men came out of Egypt under the blood of the Passover lamb and they are believers and yet they die the sin of the death and their error and their rebellion is memorialized by God on the altar of worship in Israel. Do you realize how significant that is? The worst rebellion to date in Israel is memorialized and hung on the altar of worship as a sign.

This is an oath. It's a reminder of something extremely important about God. So that sign is another of the lasting corporate signs.

There could be signs that appeared to be miraculous that were to be ignored in Israel if they accompanied a false message. Deuteronomy 13, 1-3, if a prophet comes and gives a sign and that sign is fulfilled but then he says let's go follow after other gods, don't believe him. Don't be impressed with the sign.

The magicians in Egypt were able to turn their rods into snakes. They could emulate or imitate the sign that God gave to Moses. How do you distinguish? We have this problem today.

Again, we look around and say it appears that this ministry is fruitful. It appears that people are being saved. It appears that there are demons being cast out over here.

There are some miraculous things going on so that God must be in it. The measure is not whether or not a sign is present. The measure is whether or not it lines up with the word of God.

That is the true sign that should be bound on the hand. That's Deuteronomy 13, 1-3. And God will frustrate the signs of these babblers.

It's an important verse in Isaiah 44, 25. When babblers come forth and produce these signs, God will frustrate them. Isaiah 44, 25.

When Israel again comes through, the generation changes. The 40 years of wandering, the initial generation drops in the wilderness except for Caleb and Joshua. They come up and they finally cross the Jordan into the land.

God commands Joshua to set up stones. Remember that? They put a pile of 12 stones in the midst of the Jordan riverbed while it's dry. I've often thought it would be fascinating to try to find a way to go find those stones.

It would be a wonderful confirmation of the biblical account. Be able to go over there and dam up the Jordan at the place where they crossed and clear away the silt and find Joshua's pile of 12 stones. The Bible says they are there unto this day.

And I seriously doubt anybody has gone down there and moved them. I've often

wondered, there ought to be a lot of places where you can find artifacts. When these huge battles took place, all these people were slain, I don't think somebody went out there and picked up every sword and every shield.

Where are the chariots of Pharaoh's army that drowned in the Red Sea? Somebody ought to be able to get under there and dive with a metal detector and start turning up chariots with broken wheels and all of these Egyptian skeletons. There ought to be a mess of them down there. God commanded Joshua to set stones in the Jordan and also in Gilgal.

Remember, they took 12 stones out of the riverbed and set them up in Gilgal. They took 12 stones from the side of the river and set them up down in the river. There's a lot you can do with that.

But that is a sign. That is an oath. It's a memorial.

It says, when your sons come and generations come, say, what's this pile of stones doing here in Gilgal? And Gilgal is another great study. You look at all the things that happen in Gilgal. When Saul becomes king and he goes down to Gilgal, we're going to see that God gives him a sign in Gilgal.

And in Gilgal, in Saul's day, there's still that pile of 12 stones that Joshua and the elders set up. But God commanded them to set those stones in the riverbed and in Gilgal as a sign, as an oath, a memorial reminder that God's in charge, God's in control, God is the deliverer, God is the God that brought you into this land, in the same way that the Sabbath is a reminder that God sanctifies them, Passover is a reminder that God delivered them, and so forth. Those who dwell in far-off lands are awed by the signs that God has ordained, the signs that God has commanded.

You find this in Psalm 65.8. Those who dwell in far-off lands are awed, and even rendered fearful, by God's signs. Unfortunately, their response when they see those signs is often wrong. And in Jeremiah 10.2, Jeremiah talks about the fact that when these people in far-off lands see the oath, they see the sign of God, they often respond by creating idols.

They see a sign in the heavens, and they start worshipping the sun. They see a sign, they see a manifestation of the presence and power of God, and they turn to idolatry. They reject the truth that's indicated by that sign.

Well, that, in a nutshell, is about 12 lasting signs, corporate signs. We have many examples in Scripture of more immediate signs, signs that were attached to the life of a particular individual, or were meaningful for that individual, or at a specific point in time. And we want to get to these because this has been the basis of a lot of misunderstanding of divine guidance.

I'm going to go through these quickly. Again, I'll give you a copy of these notes if you

want to look at it in more detail. We have, of course, Eve seeing the birth of Cain as a sign.

She says this is the oath of Yahweh. In Genesis 4.1, this same man, Cain, and the reason we're looking at this at this point is we're going to see that God is going to put an oath on Cain. And this is the inclusio that marks the parameters of this story.

Cain, when he's born, Eve says he's a sign of Yahweh. His birth is a sign of Yahweh. And at the end of his life, and when he departs and goes out to be a fugitive and a vagabond, he is, again, the man of the sign.

He's the man of the mark. God is going to mark him for a specific reason. To prevent his execution for the murder of his brother Abel.

That's Genesis 4.15. God tells Moses from the burning bush that he will know that God has sent him. Now this is an interesting, this is a little subcategory of signs. Moses, you remember the story, he's out there in Midian.

Take off thy shoes from off thy feet. The place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Burning bush, not consumed.

God speaks, commissions Moses to go lead the people out. And God tells Moses in Exodus 3.12 that he will know that God has sent him and that he has been called by God for this mission by an oath, by a sign. And this is the sign.

Moses will return and serve God on this very same mountain. The mountain that he stands on over there in Midian or wherever he is, apparently is Mount Sinai. And the burning bush episode takes place and God says, You're going to go, you're going to lead the people out, and you will return and serve me on this mountain.

Now think about this. God says this is a sign. He is bolstering Moses' faith.

He's encouraging Moses to go forward and perform this action. But he doesn't tell him to throw down his rod and turn into a snake. He doesn't give him a miraculous sign to confirm this.

I mean, he sees the burning bush and that in itself is miraculous. But he says, I'm going to do something in the future. This is a sign that I'm predicting.

You're going to return. Well, now Moses doesn't know if he's ever going to return to this mountain or not in his human knowledge, does he? He won't see this sign until he comes back and gets the Ten Commandments and the law on Mount Sinai. Then he's going to think back, Oh, God said at the burning bush I would be back here serving him and here I am.

So this is sort of an artillery. We have fuse delay. You put the fuse on the round and the

round is fired from the weapon.

It goes and it impacts. And when the fuse strikes, instead of instantaneously detonating the round, there's a delay. You use this if you're trying to blow up somebody in a bunker.

You want it to pierce through the top of the bunker, wait a split second, and then detonate the round. So you have a delay. Well, this is kind of like a delay fuse on this sign.

God says sometime down the road, maybe years hence, you're going to be back here serving me on this mountain. This is your sign. Now, that's important to remember because that concept of a delayed sign is going to come up in a very important context here shortly.

But that's in Exodus 3.12. Another one, the blood of the Passover lamb was a sign to God. Who is it that passed through the land of Egypt and destroyed the firstborn? Well, according to Cecil B. DeMille, it was kind of a green mist. Remember that? It comes creeping down through the streets of the city.

You can often catch someone on a detail of their knowledge. You say, well, who was it that killed the firstborn? Well, it was the angel of death. The angel of death went through and killed all the firstborn in Egypt.

But if you go back and read Exodus, it was the Lord who passed through. And the blood on the doorpost was an oath to the Lord. It was a sign to the Lord.

He says in Exodus 12.13, and again in verse 23, the blood of the Passover lamb was a sign so that the Lord would not kill the firstborn within the house. When the Lord passed through and saw the blood, that was a sign to the Lord. It signified something to God about the people inside.

That they trusted the promise. That by applying the blood, the firstborn would not die. So, this is another use of that word.

The clans in Israel. You have the twelve tribes, and then within the tribes you have clans. And Moses and Aaron, for example, were from the tribe of Amram.

Or the clan, rather, of Amram in the tribe of Levi. Amram was not the father of Moses and Aaron and Miriam. But that was their clan affiliation.

Well, each clan in Israel had a banner. Had a flag, kind of like a coat of arms and crests and things like that. Well, apparently, each clan within each tribe in Israel had a standard.

Had a banner with some symbol on it that indicated their identity. And this is referred to in Numbers 2.2. The clans of Israel are going to gather under their banners. Each one is

going to gather under their standard.

Enemy armies did the same thing. They had flags, banners. This has been true all down through history.

But it's referred to in Psalm 74.4 that enemies raise their standards, their signs, under which they gather against the people of God. Remember the attack on Jericho. After they put the stones in the Jordan and come across.

They're going to attack Jericho, march around, the walls are going to fall. The spies have been in there and talked with Rahab. The scarlet cord in the window is an oath.

It is a sign of the covenant between the spies and Rahab. It's fascinating to read. There are conditions on that covenant.

If you tell anybody we were here, the deal's off. If you fail to hang the scarlet cord in the window, the deal's off and we are free. We've promised to protect your family, but if they're not in this room when we attack, the deal's off.

We are free of the covenant which you have made us swear to you, the spies tell her. And that's all recorded in Joshua 2. Verse 12 talks about specifically that Rahab asks for mercy as a true sign from the spies. She says, show mercy to me and my family as a true sign.

This is another one of those future signs. They haven't shown any mercy to her yet. She says, let's make this covenant.

Let's make this agreement. And when you all come and take the land as I know you're going to, spare me and my family as a true sign to me. The sparing of the family is going to be an oath, a true sign.

It hasn't happened yet. Just like Moses has not yet gone back to serve God on the mountain at the burning bush point. Joshua 2.12 Gideon, poor Gideon out there threshing.

He doesn't seem to be very gifted in the area of leadership. He seems full of doubts and so forth. But the angel of the Lord appears to him and indicates to him that he needs to take a leadership role in Israel.

And Gideon says, wait a minute. Let me confirm that what you say is true and that you are who you appear to be. Let me get an offering out here.

And so Gideon goes and quickly prepares an offering and brings it out and sets it on a rock. And fire comes down. Now this is a place where fire comes down and consumes somebody's offering.

It doesn't happen to our knowledge in Genesis 4, but it does happen in Judges 6.17-22. And that fire coming down and consuming Gideon's offering is the sign. It's the oath that it is God who is calling him to leadership. Now you start to see a pattern in the signs of God.

Both the corporate ones and the individual ones. They always point to God and to the plan of God and the purpose of God. They confirm to someone that what they are about to embark on or what they have been commanded to do is God's will and is God's plan.

It furthers the purpose of God. Signs encourage people to follow the way of the Lord. The simultaneous deaths of Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli.

When God tells Eli, you have messed up as a priest. You have failed in your leadership responsibilities in Israel. Over in 1 Samuel 2. Remember Samuel hears the voice at night.

Eli tells him to say, here am I. Speak Lord, your servant is here. And so on. And the message comes back that Eli and his house will come under discipline.

And God is going to cut off their line because of their disobedience and their unfaithfulness. And they are priests. God says this is going to be the sign.

Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will both die in the same day. Judged in 1 Samuel 2.34. And that confirms, that is the sign of a long lasting curse on the house of Eli. They are never going to have an old man in their household and so forth.

Signs confirm Saul's destiny as the king of Israel. And this is a great study. We saw at least part of it when we went through 1 Samuel.

1 Samuel 10. Really the whole chapter, but especially verses 7-9. There are going to be certain signs.

God predicts what Saul is going to encounter and what is going to happen. And this is to bolster his courage. And to let him know that yes, he really is the anointed of God to be the first king of Israel.

And he meets the prophets coming down from the mountain. And prophesies and meets these individuals. There are these signs that are given.

And they confirm that this is the will of God that is happening. Jonathan and his armor bearer. When all of Israel is quaking in their boots and Saul is afraid to attack.

Jonathan and his armor bearer go out there and basically face down the entire Philistine army in the past. We studied that in 1 Samuel as well over in chapter 14. But Jonathan says, we are going to stand up and be seen by the Philistine sentries.

And if they say, wait there and we will come down to you. That is going to mean one

thing. If they say, come up here and meet us.

That is going to mean something else. This will be a sign as to whether or not God is with us. And whether or not God is going to bless us with victory.

Sign that this is the will of God. That is what an oath is for. God confirms that Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch.

Remember the Assyrian invasion and the ten northern tribes are taken out into captivity. Well, Sennacherib and Assyria tried to come down and take Judah. And tried to take Jerusalem.

But God said and confirmed through a sign that Sennacherib would be turned away. And he would not take Jerusalem. And in 2 Kings 19.29 and Isaiah 37.30, God confirms that with a sign.

God reversed the course of the shadow on Hezekiah's sundial. Hezekiah is on his deathbed. He turns his face to the wall and prays to God.

And Isaiah comes and says, you are going to live another 15 years. And this is a sign. I can either make the shadow advance or the shadow reverse its course on your sundial.

Hezekiah says, well, time will pass if it is going to advance. If it is a sign from God, have it go the wrong way. And it does.

That is 2 Kings 20 verses 8 and 9. Isaiah 38 verses 7 and 8 and again in 22. David prayed that God would mark him with a sign. So that his enemies would be ashamed.

In Psalm 86 verse 17. David prayed for a sign for good. To cause his enemies to be ashamed.

For his enemies to realize that David is in God's will. That David is God's choice as king and as ruler. God gave Ahaz and the house of David a sign.

Remember the sign of Emmanuel. Behold a virgin will conceive and bear a son. And you will call his name Emmanuel.

In Isaiah chapter 7 verses 11 and 14. Also Isaiah and his children with those horrible names. Maher-shalhash-baz and so forth.

Isaiah says he and his children are a sign in Israel. In Isaiah 8 verse 18. God confirms that he is going to overthrow the Egyptians.

A lot of people were lobbying saying we need to go make a treaty with Egypt. We need to rely on the Egyptians to help deliver us. God is going to overthrow the Pharaoh.

To confirm his predicted discipline on Judah. He says this is going to be a sign to you.

Pharaoh Hofra is going to be overthrown.

Everybody thought he was so strong. He is the ally we need. God says I am going to wipe him out.

I am going to take his throne away from him. Jeremiah 44 verses 29 and 30. This is one of the signs that I am personally glad that I was not Ezekiel.

Poor Ezekiel. If you read the account of his ministry. He had a tough job as a prophet in Israel.

God tells Ezekiel to do a lot of different things. He has to take off his underwear and bury it in the dirt. Then dig it up and wear it.

Do all kinds of strange things. One of the things that God told him to do in Ezekiel chapter 4. Go out and build a toy model of Jerusalem. Build a little city and put up siege works and ramps.

Play in the sand just like my little brother used to do. With his trucks and his army men and so forth. Create this model of Jerusalem.

Show that it is being besieged. Put an iron plate to show that it is being under siege. Nothing can get in and nothing can get out.

Then God says, I want you to lay on your left side by this model of the city for 390 days. You think about this. How many days a year? 365.

You are going to add another 25 days to that. So for one year and 25 days. Without getting up, without moving, without even changing sides.

Ezekiel is going to lay there playing with this model of Jerusalem under siege. One day for every year. It is all symbolic.

It is all a sign. God says this is going to be a sign in Ezekiel chapter 4 verses 1-8. We have three instances of future signs.

These don't really fall under either of the first two categories. This category we just finished were signs that individuals gave on a specific occasion or for a specific reason. But there will be an altar to the Lord right in the middle of Egypt.

In that day. In the future. During the latter days.

The last days and the inception of the millennial kingdom and so forth. There is going to be an altar to the Lord in Egypt. Isaiah 19.

19 and 20. The restoration of the nation of Israel after being gone for so long is in itself going to be an everlasting sign. Isaiah 55.

13. God is going to set this again as future. God will set a sign among the Gentiles and they will declare God's glory to the nations.

Isaiah 66. Verses 18 and 19. So what are our conclusions about signs? Well.

Signs are often accompanied by wonders. You have the phrase signs and wonders. And this is the Hebrew word mopeth.

M-O-P-H-E-T-H. It is even translated sign in a few places like 1 Kings 13. Jeroboam sets up a false altar and sacrifices on it.

It is full of ashes and God sends the prophet and says this is going to be a sign. That altar is going to split and the ashes are going to spill out. And Jeroboam gets very angry that the man of God comes up and says this.

He stretches out his hand to tell him to seize the prophet and his hand shrivels up right on his shoulder. It just withers. And sure enough the altar splits and the ashes spill out.

This is in 1 Kings 13. Hezekiah's backward sundial is referred to three or four different places in scripture. And in 2 Chronicles 32.24 that very general account of the sign uses the word mopeth.

Ezekiel himself is a sign and a wonder to Israel. Ezekiel 12.6. Ezekiel 12.11. Ezekiel 24. Verses 24 and 27.

It is often translated. It often accompanies the word ot. And is translated wonders.

You find this in just a few examples. Exodus 7.3. Deuteronomy 4.34. Deuteronomy 6.22. 7.19. 26.8. Nehemiah 9.10. Many other passages. Now in the New Testament we have a Greek word semion that is used for signs.

And it is incredibly rare in the New Testament. There aren't any New Testament references to signs. They are a big deal in the Old Testament.

But Jesus tells his generation they are not going to be given a sign. You are not going to receive a sign. Except the sign of Jonah.

He tells them this in Matthew 16.4. Mark 8.12. Luke 11.29. And refers to it again in John 6.30. Where they ask him for a sign and he doesn't give them one. The only sign they are going to receive is his resurrection. Tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up again.

John 2.18-22. Now his generation should have discerned the signs that were already present. The signs of the times. Matthew 16.3. And the signs of Jesus works.

John 20.30. Remember John says Jesus did many other signs. If you tried to write them

down the earth couldn't contain all the books. They should have discerned those things.

But they did not. And so the only sign given them is the resurrection of Christ. The last days will be marked by signs.

Matthew 24.24. There are signs in the heavens. There will be false prophets who have false signs. Mark 13.22. There will be signs in the heavens.

Luke 21.11. Luke 21.25. Revelation 15.1. All of these are end time signs. The church age of course is inaugurated with signs. And you can look almost everywhere in the book of Acts.

Acts 2.19. Acts 2.22. Acts 2.43. Acts 4.30. Acts 5.12. Acts 8.13. 11.28. 14.3. Romans 15.19. 2 Corinthians 12.12. Remember 2 Corinthians 12. That's around your tongues and so forth. Tongues are a sign.

Specifically 1 Corinthians 14.22. What is the point? Signs indicate God's will. Generally on a grand scale. All of our signs are in the word of God.

We do not look in our circumstances for signs. We don't say, well, this circumstance flowed together in a very happy fashion. This must be a sign from God.

It's not. Our signs are just like the sign for Israel that was bound on the hand. It's the word of God.

We can observe the signs. The oath. The Mopeth.

The Simeon. That God has for us in his word. But we don't look in our circumstances for signs.

Because God's will and God's plan have been fully revealed in his word. Those are the signs to which we look. As we saw in our study of divine guidance, it is a great mistake to look at circumstances or look at events and say, well, this is a sign.

I'm going to base my decision on the fact that God seems to have worked this out. It can just as easily be a trap. It can just as easily be a snare.

Was this from God or is this a distraction? Is this a confirmation or is this a test? We have no way of knowing apart from God's word because God's word is where the signs are. Cain is the man of the sign. He is called that by his mother when he's born, and he lives his life that way as a marked man, the man of the sign, because of his murder of his brother.

When we resume our study next week, we're going to see why that is. Why is it so important? Why is the inclusio for the story of Cain the idea of a sign? What is the sign, the mark of Cain? People have wondered what it physically was. We're more interested

in what it means to us.

Why God emphasizes that he is the man of the mark. That's where we'll pick up next time. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the clear way in which you have communicated your will and your plan to us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us, remind us of these things, and enable us through them to live in a way that pleases you and glorifies our Savior.

We ask it in his name. Amen.