

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The Sign

A sign is a miraculous event that contradicts natural law and is, therefore, believed to be a demonstration of the power of God. Yahweh (the LORD) offered signs to Israel throughout their history to help increase their faith in Him. When Israel was in captivity in Egypt, Yahweh showed signs of his power. In one example, He changed a rod into a serpent:

- 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent.
- 10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. -Exodus 7

Although imitators also have power to show signs, their power is no match for the power of Yahweh:

- 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.
- 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. -Exodus 7

After a series of miraculous signs to persuade the Egyptian Pharaoh to free Israel, Yahweh showed them the sign of the Passover (see Exodus 12). He told the people of Israel to put the blood of a lamb over their doorpost. He then proceeded to kill the firstborn of all who were not saved from death by the blood of the lamb:

- 29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. -Exodus 12

The firstborn of all of Israel, which had the sign of the blood of the lamb over their doorposts, were miraculously spared from death. Yahweh then told Moses:

- 2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: *it is* mine. -Exodus 13

Yahweh told Israel that they were to remember (a memorial between their eyes, or in their minds) the Passover (as a sign that they practiced with their hand). In doing so, they would keep His word and remember His power to save His people from their captivity.

- 9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.
- 10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year. -Exodus 13

In spite of Yahweh's command to remember, Israel forgot. The nation was eventually divided into two (called Israel and Judah). Forgetting the sign that had freed them from captivity in Egypt, Israel was taken captive by Assyria. Yahweh spared Judah for a while, as He pleaded with them through the prophets to remember and obey Him.

Nevertheless, many of the kings of Judah caused their people to sin by rejecting Yahweh and worshipping false gods. When Ahaz became their king, he adopted the false religious worship practices that had led Israel back into captivity. He even performed the abominable sin of sacrificing his own son on the altar of the pagan gods and worshipped these gods in the high places, hills, and "under every green tree:"

- 2 Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.
- 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.
- 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. -2 Kings 16

Ahaz even copied the altar to the pagan gods that he had seen in Damascus and worshipped upon it:

- 12 And when the king *was* come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. -2 Kings 16

Even though Ahaz had utterly rejected Yahweh, was engaging in false worship, and was being threatened by other nations with destruction (see Isaiah 7), Yahweh made him an awesome offer. He invited Ahaz to ask for a miraculous sign that, when it would come to pass, would restore his faith in the power of Yahweh:

10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,
11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. -Isaiah 7

However, under the guise of false reverence to Yahweh, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign:

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. -Isaiah 7

While Ahaz had apparently forgotten the Passover, Yahweh promised another sign that would show His power to save His people:

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. -Isaiah 7

A virgin would miraculously conceive a firstborn son. He would be called Immanuel, meaning “God with us.” When that sign would be revealed, it would demonstrate the miraculous power of Yahweh. It would be a day of His making and a great cause for rejoicing:

23 This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.
24 This is the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. -Psalms 118

The Son would come as the Savior, to “Save now:”

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. -Psalms 118

He would come in the “name of the LORD:”

26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD : we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. -Psalms 118

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What is the “name of the LORD?” It is Hebrew, יהוה, and is transliterated into English as YHWH and translated as “Yahweh.” In its short form, it is יה (YH), or “Yah.”

27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar. -Psalms 118

Yahweh told Joseph how He would reveal the promised sign:

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. -Matthew 1

We learn that the virgin would conceive a son by the Holy Ghost, which is by the Spirit of God. This time, however, we learn that His name would be called JESUS, because “he shall save his people from their sins.” The name is adapted from the Hebrew name יהושע (yhusa), which literally means “Yah is salvation.” The table below shows how His name has been modified as it passed through various languages into English.

Hebrew	יהושע	יהושע	יהושע
Greek	ησους	↓	↓
Latin	Iesus	Iosue	↓
Old English	Iesus	Iosua	↓
English	Jesus	Joshua	Yahshua

From Hebrew to Greek to Latin to English, it is “Jesus.” From Hebrew to Latin to English, it is “Joshua.” From Hebrew to English (without the modifications of the Greeks and Romans), it is “Yahshua.” Therefore, Yahshua is the English translation of the Hebrew name, which retains its original meaning: Yah is salvation.

Therefore, the sign that Yahweh gave to Ahaz was that He would miraculously come to man as the Savior:

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. -Matthew 1

The prophetic sign was revealed when a virgin named Mary conceived and bore the child. Joseph married her:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. -Matthew 1

The Son was born to fulfill the sign of the Passover with His own blood. He became the “Lamb of God.”

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. -John 1

We keep the sign of the Passover by faith and are thereby saved from the bondage of sin by the blood of the Lamb.