

10 – Bo, Joshua 8 - Outline

Parsha Summary

Sh'vat

1. meanings: branch, rod, tribe
 - a. central idea: extension, a single point extends outward
2. Shimona Tzukernik: it is the month of “extending holiness” into all the mundane areas of our lives (https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/2091720/jewish/The-Month-of-Shevat.htm)
3. mazal for Sh'vat: Aquarius, the bucket, the water carrier – carrying truth of Torah (water) from here to there (extending where the water touches)
4. bodily ability: eating – the function of taking the material world into the body and, through an inward process of liberating the sparks within it, transforming the material world into good deeds
5. Sh'vat's fit into the calendar
 - a. half-year of light (spring/summer) – awakening, filling with light/truth
 - b. half-year of darkness (fall/winter) – learning how to bring forth that light
 - i. here bringing the light of truth to the mundane areas, giving specific physical form to the light according to our uniqueness
 1. our eating, sleeping, clothing, homes, driving, family, neighborhoods
 - c. “translating” the Torah
 - i. Deut. 1:1-3 – Moses begins his Torah “translation” on Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, the book of Deuteronomy
 - ii. 10th of Tevet – also connected to translating the Torah

Parsha Bo

1. Our Focus Today: essence of humanity
 - a. because Sh'vat is drawing us near to our purpose, our essence (bringing holiness and light into the physical darkness)
 - b. previously on this topic of essence:
 - i. “Shemot,” “Names” is a book of essence
 - ii. “Israel” speaks of a struggle and victory with God
 - c. man's essence at the beginning
 - i. Day 2 – creation of spiritual and physical realms
 1. spiritual law: seeing in unity, it is self-sacrificial, cooperative
 2. physical law: seeing in separation, it is self-preservation and unique identity
 3. these two are complimentary, like husband and wife
 - ii. God then seeds life into the physical realm and tasks it with filling up the earth, bringing it to life
 1. bringing heaven to earth
 2. fusing the spiritual and physical

3. transcending the physical; life is miracle, supernatural
 - a. entropy is natural law – ordered systems decay
 - b. life brings order and eternity to that which tends to disorder and is finite
 4. all of life has the potential to function according to spiritual law
 - a. we still see this to some degree, especially in plants
 - i. the trees are sharing resources with other trees through the fungal network; the fungus receives sugar in the bargain and provides minerals to the trees – it's a bunch of sharing going on down there
 - b. animals too: Isaiah 65:25: "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD."
- iii. What happened?
1. Day 6 – choice, free will is introduced
 - a. beast and man created
 - b. mankind sees himself as very near to the beasts; there is a tension within him
 - i. looks among them for a helpmate, but none is found
 - ii. Adam has two sides, and a choice
 1. "Adam" = "aleph" + "dam," the spiritual + blood (the nephesh/beastly/earthy)
 - c. mankind is given dominion
 - i. his choices will greatly affect all of creation
 2. the beast side speaks to Eve, mankind falls, and the beast side comes to dominate, enslaving humanity and all life to natural law
 - a. the animals eat each other and poison each other to try to retain their bit of earth
2. In parsha Bo, we see the story of mankind continue
- a. the overthrow of the beast and the start of filling the physical with holiness
 - b. How is Egypt the beast that is our physical side?
 - i. "Egypt" = "Mitzrayim" = "double straits/very narrow"
 1. narrow and constricted like the beast, the snake
 - a. this is what the physical world does – constriction
 - b. our spirits don't want to come to this place of constriction
 - ii. the personification of Egypt, Pharaoh, also resembles the snake
 1. Pharaoh has a snake on his forehead
 2. his headdress is shaped like the cobra hood
 3. his fake beard is the segmented body of a snake
 - iii. ancient Egypt was controlled by a fear of death
 1. save up their money or squander the wealth of Egypt (in the case of Pharaoh) to provide for themselves in the afterlife

3. What does Bo add?
 - a. our time to be enslaved is ordained, and so is our time for deliverance; when our time comes, God makes it happen
 - b. Bo is the key moment of flipping, when the oppressor's hold is broken and it becomes a tool in our hand, ready to be filled with holiness
 - i. Israel plunders the physical wealth of Egypt, literally coming out with it in their hands
 1. they don't quite know yet how to build something holy with it, but that is coming soon with the giving of the Torah and the directions for building the Tabernacle, a home for God on earth
 2. we need to pay attention to what is happening with the riches of Egypt all along the way
 - c. These are times in the calendar that are bringing us near to our purpose as human beings. Let's keep our ears open and our eyes open to how God would help us to bring more holiness into our everyday lives now.

Yeshua

1. At the center of the grand reversal is the lamb of Passover, and its blood
 - a. "The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household...Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old...you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it...In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:1-13)
2. Yeshua is portrayed here as a beast, a lamb. What does that mean?
 - a. the slaying of clean beasts is also the foundation of the sacrificial system that God gives us
 - b. there is a difference between the lamb and the serpent:
 - i. the serpent is an unclean animal associated with constriction and death. They either inject venom or suffocate their prey, or both.
 - ii. the lamb is a clean animal associated with innocence and gentleness and communal living in a flock; eating grass, they do not live off of death

- c. the lamb is a picture of the clean life sacrificed on our behalf that replaces the corrupted, unclean beast nature tainted by sin and death
 - i. in His death, the beast corrupted by death is killed, and in His resurrection His life is given to all of us
- 3. Yeshua also teaches us through His life how to *fulfill* the Torah, meaning how to live the Torah to its fullest, bringing it to every mundane area of life

Joshua 8

1. summary
 - a. victory over Ai and Bethel
 - b. renewal of the covenant at Shechem (Mts. Ebal and Gerizim)
2. Israel is in the midst of bringing holiness to the physical nooks and crannies allotted to them, the Land of Israel
 - a. also happens at Passover, by the blood of the Lamb
 - b. critical second piece – the covenant defined by Torah
 - i. how do we know what holiness is unless we are told?
 - ii. “Here are the instructions for taking the wealth of the physical world and using it in holy ways to make a suitable home for My Spirit on the earth.”
3. In this period of the year, we must ask ourselves, “How can I bring the truth of Torah into this area and this one and this one?”

Transcript (not exact)

Parsha Summary

Welcome to Spiritual Seasons, where we examine the weekly Torah portion in the light of the spiritual calendar God has given us. Today we are in portion Bo, which means both “Go” and “Come.” Let’s start with a quick summary of the portion. Bo is the portion where the people of Israel are released from Egypt. The portion starts in Exodus 10 with the plague of locust. We then have the plague of darkness, a darkness that can be felt. The text then moves on to describe all of the instructions Israel was given to prepare for and conduct themselves during the 10th and final plague, the death of the firstborn. These instructions revolve around the Passover lamb. At this time, Passover is given to the nation as the first of the annual mo’edim, a perpetual statute, and God declares the month of Passover to be the first month. The people do as they are instructed, and the result is that they are passed over when the rest of Egypt is struck by the 10th plague. The people are then driven out of Egypt completely, but not before they ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver and the treasures of Egypt, which the Egyptians are happy to give as they push them out. A mixed multitude of peoples goes out with them. The portion ends with more instructions about the commandment to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread and the redemption of the firstborn.

Sh’vat

Before we move toward connecting the calendar to this portion, we need to talk about the new month we have just entered, the month of Sh'vat. The core idea of Sh'vat can be found when we find the common thread in the apparently very different meanings of the word. "Sh'vat" can mean "branch" or "rod" or "tribe," as in the 12 tribes of Israel. What these have in common is the idea of extension, something that begins at a single point and extends outward from that point. A branch is an extension of the tree. A rod is an extension of an arm – picture a shepherd's hook. A tribe is an extension and outgrowth of a family. The tribes take the divine light from the parents and carry that light outward into new places in the world. Shimona Tzukernik says that this month is about "extending holiness." In Sh'vat, we are bringing holiness and godliness into all the mundane areas of our lives and into the dark corners of the world around us. Again, it's a month for extending holiness.

This idea of extending holiness works well with our overall developing understanding of the yearly cycle. The overall pattern we have been exploring involves half a year of light dominating the darkness, the spring and summer side of the year- in which God takes a dominant role in shining His light to first awaken us and then to fill our immature minds with truth. These six months of light end with us seeing our own fallen condition and a time of repentance. This is followed by six months of darkness dominating the light in which we are learning how to bring forth that light which we have internalized, reflecting light back like the moon at night reflecting the light of the sun. In the six months when darkness dominates, we are learning how to grow up to be a mature bride who doesn't only take but who also gives back out of her own heart. We are learning how to give specific physical form to the light as each of us is uniquely positioned to do.

And now here we come to the 11th month, and we find that the 11th month is about extending the light and the holiness of truth into the mundane areas of our lives. How do we take the light of truth and apply that to our eating, to our sleeping, to our clothing, to our homes, to our driving, to our family lives and our work lives, to our neighborhoods and our cities? How do we translate the Torah for those around us? It's up to us to do this translating and extending of the light of truth and holiness. It's up to the bride to be the reflection. So we can see the emphasis of this month fitting right into the overall pattern.

I mentioned the idea of *translating* the Torah just now. One of our clues to the nature of Sh'vat is the first few verses in Deuteronomy. I'll read part of the first three verses. Listen for the number 11:

"These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph...It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea. In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them,"
(Deuteronomy 1:1-3)

So, the number 11 is mentioned twice here, including, importantly, the 1st day of the 11th month. Moses begins speaking out Deuteronomy on Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat, the first of Sh'vat. And Deuteronomy is, in a sense, the beginning of man translating the Torah. Deuteronomy is also called "Mishneh Torah," the repetition of the Torah, or "second Torah." It is considered slightly different from the first 4 books of Torah because it's a man, Moses, putting the Torah into his own words. For this reason, Deuteronomy is considered the beginning of the Oral Torah. It's Moses' repetition of the Torah for a new generation. We can call Deuteronomy Moses' translation of the Torah, and Moses begins this translation on the first day of Sh'vat.

We already had a kind of seed of this last month in Tevet. If you remember, the 10th of Tevet is a day of mourning for the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, but a second reason given for mourning at this time is that 70 Jewish translators were forced to translate the Torah into Greek, finishing near the 10th of Tevet. This is thought to be a tragedy because of how it disconnects the Torah from the holy tongue and opens the Torah to misunderstandings. Yet this going out of the light of Torah into the mundane spaces of the world – in this case the Greek-speaking world— is very much a part of the energy of this quarter of the year.

Parsha Bo Application

As we turn now to parsha Bo, I want to focus on both these ideas related to the month of Sh'vat and also the ESSENCE of humanity because, in fact, this emphasis of Sh'vat is drawing us very near to our purpose and essence. So, we'll spend some time thinking today about the fundamental human project, what a human being is and is meant to do because parsha Bo is a big step forward for mankind. We mentioned this idea of driving to essence at this time of year a couple of weeks ago when pondering why it is that we're reading Exodus now in this final section of the year. At that time we talked about the Hebrew word "Shemot," "Names," as being connected to ESSENCE. We also talked at that time about the name "Israel" being a broad description of God's people, "Israel" meaning "one who struggles with God." All throughout Exodus we're seeing important pictures of that struggle with God, the struggle of Israel. Along the way here, we're going to string together some of the most fundamental themes in Scripture, from beginning to end. What I want to do today is go back to the beginning in Genesis and take another look at that text from a certain perspective, then carry that perspective forward to see the exodus from Egypt in that light. Our topic today is the core challenge for humanity and how the exodus fits into the story of how that core challenge plays out over time. What we'll look at today is perhaps not anything new, but the angle may be new enough that it can spark some fresh perspectives for you.

So, let's go back to the beginning, or near to the beginning. On Day 2 of creation, God splits reality into the waters above and the waters below. The sages understand this to be the division of the spiritual realm and the physical realm. When He creates a realm, He must also create the rules and laws that govern that realm, how it works. So at this time, He creates laws for the spiritual realm and laws for the physical realm. These are complimentary laws, though they are also opposite in a way. At the root of the spiritual realm is the perception of unity, and what you do in that realm is based on self-sacrifice and cooperation. The physical realm is

based on the perception of separation, unique identity, and what you do in that realm is take care of yourself, work to make sure you have provided for yourself. These two realms don't have to be at odds. They are designed to fit together like husband and wife.

As the days of creation progress, God puts the seed of life in the various realms – the seas and the skies and the land. And He charges that life with expanding and filling up every nook and cranny of the lower realm with His spirit, the breath of life. In that way, the entire earth is to come to life and become a home for God. If this can happen, then the spiritual realm will be brought everywhere into the physical realm. The two will be merged again. And this brings a kind of transcendence to the merely physical realm. It brings miracle everywhere to the physical realm. It elevates the physical beyond the mere laws of the physical. Again, it is a merging of the two realms. Life, itself, transcends the natural, and life is meant to make a home in all the soils of earth, in every cave. Life is meant to fill the air with wings and the deeps with fins so that everywhere there is a natural home for the supernatural life.

Let me explain what I mean just a bit more by saying that life, itself, is supernatural, miraculous. One of main laws of the physical realm is called entropy. Entropy essentially means that an ordered system, if left on its own, tends toward disorder. Some part inevitably wears out and stops working, and the system falls apart and breaks down and all the little pieces slowly separate. And at the very end of entropy, even the atoms are separated from each other, and then we have what's called "heat death," meaning there's no heat and movement left in the system, and even the atoms are frozen in place. Nothing moves. This is the natural progression according to the laws of nature.

But what does life do? Life defies entropy. Life takes what is previously unordered and makes order out of it. A tree takes the unordered elements in the soil, pulls bits of it together selectively, and creates the most delicate and complex microscopic nano-machines. And it's pretty, too. And all of those billions of nano-machines work together to build and to build and to build and to produce fruit for us to eat and wood for us to make homes and seed to create new generations of plants. It's order upon order upon order. This is what life does, and it flies in the face of the physical laws. It's a miracle. It is all happening WITHIN the physical realm, using the physical realm, yet it rises above the physical realm; it TRANSCENDS the physical. It is the bringing of eternity into the material realm – generation after generation of life that exists within but above. This is what life is designed to do. Above all, life is designed to connect with other life in a selfless way to reproduce and fill the earth and, thereby, bring heaven to earth.

We know that everything with life in it has this potential to function according to the spiritual realm down here. Plants still show a lot of this cooperative and self-sacrificial character. Science is learning now about how they not only share resources with each other, but they do so through an entirely different kingdom, the fungal network, and in the process, the fungal network and the tree networks also share resources. And we're told in Isaiah 65 that one day, "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25). So, life has this potential.

So what happened? Well, we come now to Day 6 of creation. On Day 6 two classes of life are created, the beasts and mankind. And with mankind comes the introduction of choice, free will. And man's choice will influence everything on earth. You see man is created very near to the beasts. Both of them being created on Day 6 means that the number of the beast is 6 and the number of man is also 6. And Adam is even a bit confused about his relationship to the animals because he can see how much he has in common with them. The fact that Adam can give names to the animals means that he can see deeply into their essence. Name is essence, and Adam can discern their names. And as he is naming them, he is looking for his partner among them, his helpmate. And he doesn't find one suitable for him. But you see that Adam identifies very strongly with the beasts to the point that he's looking for his mate among them. In the end, he recognizes that there is a certain kind of spark of God in him that separates him from the beasts, so none of them is suitable for him. Adam bears the image of God in a distinct way that is higher than the beasts. But we see this tension from the very beginning between Adam's two sides, his beast side and his elevated side.

And we see this distinction within Adam in his very name, the name of all mankind, "adam" (<https://aish.com/48956911/>). "Adam" can be separated into "aleph," the first letter of the aleph-bet, and "dam," which is "blood." Blood is red and is the color of the earth from which Adam's body is made. The blood is also where the nephesh resides, that part of the soul that we have in common with all the beasts. In other words, all the beasts are described as being "nephesh chayah," "living souls," and this includes Adam. Adam also has a nephesh like the beasts, and the nephesh is located in the blood. The aleph is a reference to man's higher being, his spiritually transcendent being, as the aleph is the lord and master of the aleph bet. Adam is created as a merger of the aleph and the dam, the elevated and the beast. And he is given the choice as to how he will live. If he leans toward the aleph ruling his being, then he will be giving priority to spiritual law, and if he leans toward the dam ruling, he will be giving priority to the physical law that sees mostly in separation and tries to claw for resources all the time, for self-preservation.

Now, there's another important element here: Adam is given dominion over the whole earth, over all the living things. And as the king goes, so goes the nation. In other words, if Adam leans toward the right, all living things lean toward the right. If Adam leans toward the left, all living things lean toward the left.

This brings us to the garden and mankind's big choice. What comes to talk to Eve in the garden? It is a beast, the most clever beast of the field, the snake. Can I suggest that one level we should apply to Genesis 3 is this: the snake is the beast part of Eve. It is part of her own self talking to her, the physically inclined part of her own self. And can we not identify with our own nephesh and even our own body speaking craftily to us sometimes? There is an epic battle for the ages raging inside humanity. And what do we see all the way at the very end of Scripture, in the book of Revelation? We see the beast rising up again, and we see a final battle, and we see the crushing of the beast.

Don't get me wrong - our physical being is not an enemy. At least, it's not created to be an enemy. It is created to be a beautiful tool which we fill with holiness and make fruitful to fill the earth, bringing heaven to earth. And we can see from Scripture that the flesh will be turned to this purpose, eventually. If Revelation teaches us nothing else, it is that the beast is defeated in the end by the blood of the Lamb so that spiritual law can dominate and we are freed to use the material world as it is intended to be used.

But after that look ahead, let's return to the garden now. When Adam and Eve fall, all of creation is changed. The beast side and natural law comes to dominate both within man and for all life on earth. And not only that, but the introduction of death brings a much greater sense of separation for everything, far beyond the separation that is inherent in physicality. And this drives everything even deeper into natural law. What we see now when we look outside is that the animals are prone to eating each other – which isn't exactly self-sacrifice and cooperation, and it isn't a great way to fill the world with life. The ocean reefs are filled with animals secreting poisons so that they can keep their little place on the ocean floor, and many plants are doing the same on land. There's as much battle and killing as there is cooperation and reproduction. The consciousness of connectedness and cooperation out there is not unheard of, but it's not the general rule as it once was. In fact, we are all enslaved to the physical realm and the laws of sin and death. We naturally function according to "might makes right." If I'm bigger or smarter, I take what I can because I have to survive on my own in this world. And we're killing each other and everything else around us as we claw for resources because we are enslaved to the beast. Something must be done.

And this brings us back to Egypt. Egypt is an amazing picture for us of life enslaved to the beast. And so the casting off of the yoke of Egypt is a mighty event for humanity. As we come back to portion Bo, let's think about how Egypt represents enslavement to the beast, enslavement to the physical realm and the laws of the physical realm. I find God's use of symbol here to be just mind blowing. It's all sitting there in the open for us to see.

Let's start digging into Egypt by looking at the Hebrew word for "Egypt." It's the word "Mitsrayim." "Mitsrayim" means "double straits," meaning a very narrow place, or it means "double siege-works" or "doubly enclosed." A root idea here is that Egypt is a narrow, constricted place. Now, "narrow" and "constricted" are two good adjectives for the symbol of the inner beast, the snake. And with the benefit of satellites, we can see that Egypt is just a long narrow strip of green that ends in the north with a flaring green delta, like a fan at the end. Egypt is now and always has been defined by the Nile River meandering through the brown Sahara dessert. The vast majority of the people live along the narrow banks of the Nile. It's a very constricted country. Life is confined to the Nile valley and the fan-like Nile delta at the top. In the satellite image, Egypt doesn't only look like a snake; it looks like a specific snake - the cobra. That delta at the top looks just like the flaring hood of the cobra, which is that classic snake-charmer's snake that spreads out the skin around its head when it's upset, the cobra's hood.

And this constriction is the challenge of the physical world. We are put in a place of constriction, and we are told, "Now transcend! Bring life to this place!" The physical world is the container for the spiritual. The sages speak about our spirits existing in a spacious place of light and warmth, and they have to be convinced to come down to this physical world, where they are trapped in a cold, dark body in a place of apparent separation and death and confusion. But it is precisely the darkness and illusion of separation here that enable us to have free will to choose God.

Not only does the land of Egypt look like a cobra, but the human personification of Egypt does too. Often you will see an actual snake head on Pharaoh's forehead. And his flaring headpiece is designed to look like the open hood of the cobra. He also wears a fake beard that is segmented like the belly of the snake.

And the whole culture is controlled by death, the idea of death. The ancient Egyptians are absolutely captured by fear of death. They save up their money throughout life so that they can purchase whatever means they can to make their souls comfortable in the afterlife. It is a life focused on death. And this is most clearly seen in the richest man of them all, Pharaoh. Many Pharaohs squander the fortunes of Egypt in preparing elaborate tombs and even manmade mountains to protect their bodies and the treasures they want to have available for themselves in the afterlife. It is a culture based on the fear of death. This is beyond the laws of physicality, which seek self-preservation. This obsession with death in Egypt is the amplification of the natural law brought about by the fall of mankind.

All of this imagery is just sitting there in the Bible and in the geography of the planet and in the cultural expressions of the people of earth. It's mind-blowing how God designs His pictures. It's just pure poetry.

Okay, so the stage is set. Humanity has a problem with being enslaved to the beast, the flesh, the snake. These are represented by both Egypt and Pharaoh. This brings us right up to parsha Bo. How is the story developing here?

Israel's exodus from Egypt tells us that when the time for our deliverance comes, God steps in and makes it happen. Our slavery is ordained, and our deliverance is ordained. Bo is that key moment of flipping when the physical realm changes from being OUR MASTER to being a TOOL IN OUR HAND that can be filled with holiness and used for fruitful purposes that end up making a home for God on the earth. Before we can use the physical realm for good we need to re-gain mastery of it. Though it is granted mastery over us for a time when we are young, the material realm is not meant to be our master permanently. This is not part of God's plan. We use the physical to bring heaven to earth, to dwell together with God here. It is not to be avoided, but it is not to be a god to us either. Its dominion over us will be broken, because God accomplishes this.

Now, it's easy to see in this story that the mastery of the beast is broken, but how is it that we can see the physical BECOMING A TOOL IN ISRAEL'S HANDS HERE? Each detail of this story is

important. God makes a strong point of letting us know that Israel plunders the wealth of Egypt, the best Egypt has to offer. They do this simply by asking the Egyptians to give them their treasures before they leave, and they do! Literally Israel comes out of Egypt holding the riches of Egypt in their hands. This might seem like a small detail in the story, but it's not – it represents a flipping in which Israel becomes master over the physical world, the best that Egypt has to offer. In a sense, Israel now holds in its hands that which oppressed them just moments ago.

Now, do they know how to use that stuff for holy purposes right away? Not exactly. There's still some work to be done to make that tool a holy tool, and this especially involves receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai. In the Torah, they will be instructed in how to turn all that rich stuff into the Tabernacle, a holy home for God on earth where He can dwell in the midst of the people. Those instructions are still some 50 days away, and longer. But the power of the beast, the power of natural law, the power of the fear of death is broken here at this point, in parsha Bo, and they now hold in their hands everything they need to make a holy vessel to bring heaven to earth. So this moment is huge for the story of mankind.

As we continue tracking Israel's ongoing relationship with the material realm, we need to be paying close attention particularly to the rich stuff of Egypt – the physical wealth, this earthy legacy of Egypt. This gold and silver and bronze, these precious gems, these costly fabrics and aromatic resins and all the rest, all of this stuff becomes the tool of transcendence and relationship with God, but there are some stumbles with that stuff along the way, too. We must learn from Israel's stumbles.

Part of what I'm trying to do today is to place the exodus within a larger context and show that the themes that are working beneath the surface of this beautiful story are the grandest themes in Scripture. Humanity is designed to fuse heaven and earth. We can't do that if our beast side is in control. In His wisdom, God allows us to experience that kind of slavery for His own good purposes, for a time. And when the time ordained for that slavery is over, He breaks the back of the snake and sets us free to be about the business of filling the physical world with light and life and holiness.

And that brings us back to Sh'vat. Here we have a month near the end of the cycle of months in which the sages tell us we are being empowered to bring holiness to the mundane. And here we are now reading this great story in the Word where we're seeing Israel being empowered to do just this. These are times in the calendar that are bringing us near to our purpose as human beings. Let's keep our ears open and our eyes open to how God would help us to bring more holiness into our everyday lives now. He has put light within us. It just needs the proper vessel to shine outward into the darkness. And He will help us to craft that vessel.

Yeshua

Let's move now to seeing Yeshua in this discussion. In the story of the exodus, we see that God has made a way for the script to be flipped, for mankind to be freed from the heavy yoke of

enslavement to the beast and to come out of that condition with heaps of physical treasure that we can use for holy purposes.

And of course, at the center of that grand reversal is the little lamb of Passover, and its blood. Let me read about that now:

“The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household...Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old...you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it...In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”
(Exodus 12:1-13)

You don't get the flipping of the story without the blood of the Lamb. And Yeshua is that Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

Beyond this foundation stone, though, Yeshua through His life teaches us how to FULFILL the Torah. He says that He didn't come to abolish the Torah but to fulfill it? What does that mean? It means He shows us how to live out the Torah to its fullest degree, in every mundane area of life, with balance. He came to help us see how to bring the Torah down into the nitty gritty of life.

Joshua 8

Let's turn now to Joshua 8. Joshua 8 gives me a chance to focus on an aspect of this discussion that we haven't had time to emphasize yet. In Joshua 8, Israel lays a trap for Ai, an ambush, and ends up conquering both Ai and Bethel. At the end of the chapter, Joshua leads the people north to the area of Shechem, between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, where they renew the covenant, as they were instructed to do. Joshua actually writes the Torah on stones of the land of Canaan. He then reads out all the blessings for following the Torah and all the curses for not following it, in the presence of all Israel.

Here we have Israel in the midst of invading the land, their land, the physical nooks and crannies that God gave specially to them to fill with His Spirit of Life. This is a picture of the how

we are to likewise bring holiness to the dark physical spaces of our lives, the mundane, earthy areas of our lives. This is what the book of Joshua is all about.

In a previous chapter, we saw that they began this process at Passover. They crossed the river while it was flooding in the spring, underwent the second circumcision, and celebrated Passover. So, the blood of the lamb is right there at the beginning of this extension of holiness to the mundane.

But here in the last part of the chapter, we see that critical second piece, the covenant defined by the Torah. Our success in bringing holiness down will depend on our relationship with God, our covenant relationship with Him, and that relationship cannot be separated from the terms of the covenant, His instructions for holy living, the Torah. How do we know what holiness is unless we are told? He tells us what holiness is in the Torah. One way we can look at the Torah is this: the Torah is God saying, "Here are the INSTRUCTIONS for taking the wealth of the physical world and using it in holy ways to make a suitable home for My Spirit on the earth." The Torah is the light that we are trying to internalize and then extend into all aspects of our lives. The blood of the lamb passes us from death to life. But at some point we have to be educated in holiness so that we know how to invest our physical beings with holiness. First the blood passes us from death to life, step 1, and the Torah educates us in holiness, step 2.

Now it turns out step 2 is followed by a bit of a struggle and eventually an even deeper revelation of Torah, which we can call step 3. And I believe the Torah being written here by Joshua on the land is actually showing us this deeper revelation of Torah, Torah on the lower body, Torah on the gut and heart. But regardless, we would be remiss if we didn't mention in this discussion that it's not enough to be set free with the riches of Egypt in hand. We can still turn around and make a golden calf with that gold. We have to be instructed as to what a proper home for God looks like. It's not a golden calf. It's a Tabernacle. God is so gracious to instruct us in holiness through His Torah.

So, as we enter this intense period of bringing light and truth and life into the mundane, we must ask ourselves, "How can I bring the truth of Torah into THIS area of my life, and into THIS area and this area?" And so we see Israel emphasizing the Torah here, too, as they plunge into this process of taking the Land. They write the Torah on the very land, itself, and these two mountains in the Land are the two witnesses of their commitment to follow the Torah.

Well, we'll have to leave it there for this week. Thanks for listening. I'm not sure if all of that came through clearly, but as I said, one of my main points here is to show that the story of the exodus from Egypt is filled with biblical themes that are established right at the beginning of the Bible, and these themes are coming to a kind of resolution in these final months of the year.

May God give us the strength and the energy and the passion to see and to hear what He would speak to us now so that we can fill each nook and cranny with holiness and life. May we be people who reflect His light so that the darkness is lit up and turned into light. And may He make us the people He wants us to be. Shalom.

