



Parasha Bo

January 12, 2019

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

John 19:31-37

Shabbat shalom mishpocha! Our *parasha* today is *Bo*. The Hebrew word *bo* is a command and is one of those Hebrew words which has more than one meaning. The *parasha* begins: *Vayomer Adonai el-Moshe bo el-Par'oh; Then Adonai said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh.."* (Exodus 10:1a TLV). In this phrase, it means "go," but it means something completely opposite in other uses. In Genesis 7:1, it means "come:" 1 *Then Adonai said to Noah, "Come—you and all your household—into the ark"* ((Genesis 7:1 TLV). And, another place meaning come is in the song; *Bo Ruach Elohim; Come Holy Spirit*. But, *bo* in our *parasha* means "go." ADONAI has commanded Moses to "go" to Pharaoh because He has hardened his heart.

What does it mean to harden Pharaoh's heart? I think that most of you understand it because both Rabbi Herb and I have discussed it several times in the past. In our *parasha* today, after ADONAI brought a plague of locusts, Pharaoh agreed to let Israel go. Then verse 20 says: *Vayechazek ADONAI et-lev Par'oh velo shilach et-beney Yisra'el.. 20 But Adonai hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let Bnei-Yisrael go* (Exodus 10:20 TLV). Reading it this way, it appears that ADONAI is infringing on Pharaoh's free will, something which He gave to each of us? It appears that way, but it is not. The TLV translates *chazek* as hardened, but it is better understood as "strengthened." Strong's Concordance defines *chazek* as: "to be or grow firm or strong, strengthen." That is what ADONAI did. He strengthened Pharaoh's heart, strengthened his own will to "do what he really wanted to do." ADONAI didn't override Pharaoh's will, He just reinforced it. Pharaoh had already made up his mind as to what he wanted to do. He exercised his free will to make those decisions against letting Israel go. It was what he really wanted to do. ADONAI did not choose what Pharaoh did, He just helped him to continue in his own choice. Pharaoh reacted in this way because he believed that he, himself, was a god, the son of Amon-Ra, the sun god. In Pharaoh's mind, he was the son of the god of the universe and He would not bend to any other, even as ADONAI's power continued to prove him wrong. You in Beit Shalom know what *chazek* means because we follow the tradition of making a statement together as we complete the reading of each book of *Torah*. We say together: "*chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek,*" "Be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened." These words remind us as a congregation and also as individuals to be strong in our approach to *Torah* and in serving ADONAI. It's really a prayer, a prayer asking ADONAI that we would be strengthened in our study of *Torah*, in our understanding of *Torah* and in our faithfulness to *Torah*. Just as we ask that we are strengthened in our relationship with *Torah*, ADONAI strengthened Pharaoh's desire to keep Israel as slaves. But, He didn't place that desire in Pharaoh's heart. It was already there.

The climax of this section of Scripture is one of the most striking pictures, or foreshadowing, of future events. Yeshua, the lamb of G-d, who takes away the sins of the world is very strongly predicted in the Passover lamb in Egypt. But right now in Egypt, Pharaoh's got some big troubles. Prior to *Parasha Bo*, there have been seven plagues and the final three are in *Bo*. We remember all ten every year at our Passover *Seder*. The leader says: "These are the ten plagues brought by ADONAI upon the Egyptians: As I recite the plague in Hebrew, you repeat it in English while dipping your finger into the cup and allowing a drop of wine to fall to your plate. As the wine in our cups is diminished, we show our genuine sorrow about the losses to the Egyptians caused by each plague." The Hebrew name of each plague

is recited followed your speaking of the name in English. In order they are: Dam! Blood! Tz'fardei'a! Frogs!; Kinim! Lice!; Arov! Flies!; Dever! Pestilence!; Sh'chin! Boils!; Barad! Hail!; Arbeh! Locusts! Choshech! Darkness!; Makat B'khorot! Death of the Firstborn! Each of these plagues was a judgment on ten different gods of Egypt and were necessary because Pharaoh believed that he was the son of the chief god of Egypt. He, himself, was the false god that the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, was directed against. Pharaoh was worshipped by his people as a god and even though ADONAI showed his miraculous power with each plague, Pharaoh would not and could not back down. His ego was huge and he was arrogant and stubborn. But, we need to understand that ADONAI did not make him that way. It was his own choice. And, Pharaoh's own firstborn son was among the casualties of the tenth plague.

The climax of *Parasha Bo* is the death of the firstborn. And each year we remember many of these events when we celebrate *Pesach*. Our Passover *seder* is a combination of both traditional Jewish Passover elements and Messianic understanding about Yeshua. In John chapter 1, *Yochanan*, John refers to Yeshua as “the Lamb of G-d who takes away the sin of the world.” And, the climax, which reveals the purpose of Yeshua’s life on earth, takes place in His final week. In the four Gospels, we see the imagery which presents Yeshua as G-d’s Lamb who was foreshadowed in the Egyptian Passover. We’ll consider Yeshua’s last week of life on earth and look at some of the elements of the Egyptian Passover in His life and death.

Yeshua’s last week of life as a man actually began while He was on His way to Jerusalem, and after He arrived in Jerusalem He had only five days to live. We’ll look at each of these days.

On Friday, the 9th of the month of *Nisan*, Yeshua arrived at his friend Lazarus' home in Bethany. *1 Six days before Passover, Yeshua came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Yeshua had raised from the dead. 2 So they prepared a dinner there for Yeshua. Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him* (John 12:1-2 TLV). The Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday. The dinner spoken of was the *erev Shabbat* meal, the traditional Sabbath dinner eaten in all Jewish homes then and today. Yeshua had arrived in Bethany prior to sundown on Friday and joined Lazarus, Miryam and Marta for their *Shabbat* dinner.

The next day, Saturday, the 10th of *Nisan* was the Sabbath and Yeshua entered Jerusalem. *12 The next day, the huge crowd that had come up for the feast heard that Yeshua was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took palm branches and went out to meet Him, shouting, “Hoshia-na! Baruch ha-ba b’shem Adonai! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ The King of Israel!” 14 Finding a young donkey, Yeshua sat on it, as it is written, 15 “Fear not, Daughter of Zion! Look! Your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt”* (John 12:12-15 TLV). Having arrived in the city, Yeshua went to the Temple. *45 Then Yeshua entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants, 46 saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.” 47 And He was teaching every day in the Temple. The ruling kohanim and the Torah scholars, even the leaders of the people, were trying to destroy Him; 48 but they could not find any way to do it, because all the people were hanging on His words* (Luke 19:45-48 TLV). In Exodus 12, the 10th of *Nisan* was the day that lambs were selected to be kept in the Israelites homes and examined for four days before they were slaughtered at Passover on the 14th of *Nisan*. Yeshua began His examination by the scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem as the Lamb of G-d on the 10th of *Nisan*. In the evening He returned to Bethany for the night.

The next day, Sunday, the 11th of *Nisan*, Yeshua returned to Jerusalem from Bethany. *12 The next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry. 13 Seeing from a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if He would find any fruit on it. When He came up to it, He found nothing except leaves, because it wasn’t the season for figs. 14 And He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” And His disciples were listening* (Mark 11:12-14 TLV). Yeshua

taught in the Temple that day and when evening came, he and his disciples left the city and returned to Bethany.

The next day, Monday, the 12th of *Nisan*, they returned to Jerusalem. On their way they passed the fig tree they had seen before, but now it was withered. *20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree shriveled from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Yeshua, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed has shriveled up!" 22 And Yeshua answered, saying to them, "Have faith in God! 23 Amen, I tell you, if someone says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but trusts that what he says is happening, so shall it be for him"* (Mark 11:20-23 TLV). Yeshua again taught in the Temple. As they were leaving the Temple that evening, one of Yeshua's disciples remarked about the stones of the Temple. *1 As Yeshua was going out of the Temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, look! What stones and what buildings!" 2 Yeshua said to him, "You see these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left upon another. Every one will be torn down"* (Mark 13:1-2 TLV)! After that question, Yeshua sat on the Mount of Olives with them and described what would happen in the future. This is also found in Matthew, Mark and Luke and primarily describes what will happen 40 years in the future when the Romans would surround Jerusalem, kill and enslave over a million Jews and destroy the Temple. Yeshua and His disciples then returned to Bethany.

That evening they were at the home of a man named Simon, who had been a leper. After sundown in Bethany, the day became Tuesday, the 13th of *Nisan* and a dinner was held at Simon's home. *6 Now while Yeshua was in Bethany at the house of Simon ha-Metzora (the leper), 7 a woman came up to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive oil. And she poured it on His head as He was reclining at the table* (Matthew 26:6-7 TLV). The disciples were upset because of this use of this expensive material rather than selling it to provide for the poor. This may have been the last straw for *Yehudah*, Judas, and the situation with the expensive perfume may have precipitated what he did next. It appears that sometime that night that Judas went back into Jerusalem. *14 Then one of the Twelve, the one called Judah of Kriot, went to the ruling kohanim 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?" And they weighed out thirty shekels of silver for him. 16 From then on, Judah began looking for a chance to hand Him over* (Matthew 26:14-16 TLV).

The next morning, which was still Tuesday, the 13th of *Nisan*, Yeshua instructed his disciples to go and prepare for his Passover meal. *7 Then came the day of matzah when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Now Yeshua sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so we may eat"* (Luke 22:7-8 TLV). Peter and John went into Jerusalem and made the arrangements at an upper room according to Yeshua's instructions. Yeshua taught again in the Temple that day, the fourth day of His examination as the Lamb of G-d, the Passover Lamb. We don't have evidence that He returned to Bethany that afternoon, but more than likely He didn't because he would be having his Passover meal in Jerusalem that evening.

Let's look for a moment at Yeshua's last four days. He had been in Jerusalem teaching at the Temple on *Nisan* 10, 11, 12, and 13; four days. There are many criteria which Yeshua fulfilled as our Passover sacrifice and we don't have time to cover them all. But one of the most important is that the lamb for the sacrifice was required to be examined. In Exodus 12 ADONAI told Moses how to prepare for the Passover. *3 "Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family one lamb for the household"* (Exodus 12:3 TLV). ADONAI continues: *6 "You must watch over it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to slaughter it at twilight"* (Exodus 12:6 TLV). They were told to keep the lamb from *Nisan* 10-14, four days. The intent of this command was that they were to examine the lamb during that time to ensure that it was without any defects. This close association with the lamb also had the effect of causing the family, especially the children, to begin to love the small animal which they were

soon going to have to kill and eat. In Jerusalem in the year 30 CE, Yeshua was examined for those same four days and found without defect or flaw. Those thousands of people who waved palm branches on his first entry into Jerusalem and looked upon him during those four days would soon be weeping for the one that they had come to love who was slain.

Yeshua and his disciples were already in Jerusalem that evening when the sun went down and Wednesday, the 14th of *Nisan* arrived. In the upper room which had been prepared, they celebrated Passover. I believe that this was a legitimate celebration of Passover, not just something similar. It was a fulfillment of the command in Exodus: 10 “You are to keep this ordinance as a *moed* from year to year” (Exodus 13:10 TLV), which Yeshua obeyed and thus kept every command. It is very clear in the Gospels that this was “the Passover:” 7 *Then came the day of matzah when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed* (Luke 22:7 TLV). The lamb which was eaten by Yeshua and his disciples would have been ritually slain at the Temple by the *cohanim*, the priests.

Then they celebrated Passover together in the evening, the beginning of the 14th of *Nisan*. 14 *When the hour came, Yeshua reclined at table, and the emissaries with Him. 15 And He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will never eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 22:14-16 TLV). During the evening, they followed a set order of events. The Hebrew word, *seder*, means order and refers to the order of the Passover service which by the 1st century had been well developed with a set liturgy. It included the ritual eating of bread and drinking of wine along with the actual meal of lamb. We won't go into the all of the things which happened at Yeshua's last Passover. Today, we are just trying to understand the overall picture and we will see the full story of Yeshua's last Passover at our upcoming Passover in April. We do know that at his last *seder*, Yeshua identified His body and blood with bread and wine. And, He told his disciples that he was "the Lamb of God" and that the New Covenant was ratified by his blood. Sometime during the *seder*, Yeshua told Judah to go and do his deed quickly and Judah left. They concluded the *seder* with the traditional singing of Psalms 113-118, known as the *Hallel*, the Praise. 26 *After singing the Hallel, they went out to the Mount of Olives* (Mark 14:26 TLV). The most significant part of the *Hallel* for Passover is in Psalm 118 where the psalmist says "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." It's been there every Passover for thousands of years.

Next, we find Yeshua and his disciples in *Gat Shem'anim*, the Garden of the Olive Press, the Garden of Gethsemane. Yeshua had had a time of prayer, after which Judah arrived with the Temple guards. 43 *Right away, while Yeshua was still speaking, Judah comes up, one of the Twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the ruling kohanim, Torah scholars, and elders. 44 Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, “The One I kiss, He's the One! Seize Him and lead Him away under guard.” 45 As soon as Judah came, he drew near to Yeshua and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him. 46 Then they threw their hands on Yeshua and seized Him* (Mark 14:43-46 TLV).

And, they took Yeshua away: 53 *Then they led Yeshua away to the kohen gadol . And all the ruling kohanim, elders, and Torah scholars gathered* (Mark 14:53 TLV). Mark continues: 1 *Right at daybreak, the ruling kohanim held a meeting to consult with the elders and Torah scholars and the whole Sanhedrin. They tied up Yeshua, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate.* (Mark 15:1 TLV). The *Sanhedrin* was the Jewish high court of 70 members. Under Jewish rule, they had the power to pronounce death sentences, but the Romans had taken that power away. They had to go to Pilate to get a death sentence. We go to Luke to continue the story: 1 *Then the entire assembly got up and brought Yeshua to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this fellow subverting our nation, forbidding payment of taxes to Caesar and saying that He Himself is Messiah—a king.” 3 So Pilate questioned Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” “As you say,” Yeshua replied* (Luke 23:1-3 TLV). Eventually, Pilate gave Yeshua's accusers what they wanted; the death penalty.

Yeshua was forced to carry the crossbeam of the stake on which he was to be bound for his crucifixion. *22 They bring Yeshua to the place called Golgotha (which is translated, Place of a Skull). 23 They were offering Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He didn't take it. 24 Then they crucify Him and divide up His clothing among themselves, casting lots for them to see who should take what. 25 Now it was the third hour when they nailed Him on the stake (Mark 15:22-25 TLV).* Going back to Luke: *44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 for the sun died out. And the curtain of the Temple was torn in two. 46 And Yeshua, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, 'into Your hands I entrust My spirit.'" When He had said this, He breathed His last (Luke 23:44-46 TLV).* Yeshua was nailed to the stake at the third hour of the day according to Roman time. The third hour was three hours after sunrise, or about 9 AM. Darkness fell on the land about 12 PM, the sixth hour and Yeshua gave up His Spirit at 3 PM, the ninth hour. And, He died on the 14th of *Nisan*, the day on which the Passover lambs were to be killed.

One statement made in Scripture soon after Yeshua died has for centuries, caused misunderstanding to the Christian body regarding His final week and when his actual crucifixion occurred. *30 When Yeshua tasted the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. 31 It was the Day of Preparation, and the next day was a festival Shabbat. So that the bodies should not remain on the execution stake during Shabbat, the Judean leaders asked Pilate to have the legs broken and to have the bodies taken away (John 19:31 TLV).* Confusion arises because it is usually assumed that "this was an especially important "weekly Sabbath day," the Sabbath which occurs on Saturday. It was then assumed that Yeshua died on a Friday. But, it was not a weekly Sabbath. Leviticus 23 explains what is being said here in John 19. *6 On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Matzot to Adonai. For seven days you are to eat matzah . 7 On the first day you are to have a holy convocation and you shall do no regular work (Leviticus 23 6-7 TLV).* The "holy convocation" is a "special Sabbath," and in this case, it was the first day of the Festival of *Matzah*; the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And, it was Wednesday, the 14th of *Nisan* 14 which was the preparation day for the special Sabbath which would begin at sundown. The new day would be *Nisan* 15, the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. There are two special Sabbaths in the Festival of *Matzah*: *8....."On the seventh day is a holy convocation, when you are to do no regular work" (Leviticus 23:8b TLV).* There are a total of seven special Sabbaths in all of the *moadim*, the festivals of ADONAI throughout the year. Yeshua died on *Nisan* 14 at about 3PM and was placed in the tomb before sundown on that same day. It wasn't Friday. It was Wednesday.

I am going to stop here because this covers the events of the Egyptian Passover. We'll talk about the 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb and the resurrection some other time. What I would like to focus on to conclude our message is what Yeshua's death should mean to us as individuals. *Sha'ul* said: *3 "And even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so they might not see the light of the Good News of the glory of Messiah, who is the image of God" (2Corinthians 4:3-4 TLV).* The god of this world, the *olam hazeh*, this present world, is *HaSatan*, the Adversary. He is the god of this world because our ancestor, Adam, gave him his authority by obeying him rather than ADONAI. Yeshua did not dispute the fact that *HaSatan* is the god of this world when in the wilderness he offered him all the kingdoms of this world. But, he has limited authority. He cannot blind our minds unless we allow him to do it. Verses 8-10 say: *8 We are hard pressed in every way, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not in despair; 9 persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Yeshua, so that the life of Yeshua may also be revealed in our mortal body" (2Corinthians 4:8-10 TLV).* We who have trusted Yeshua carry in our bodies His death; because it was His death that gave us life, the life that is now manifested in our bodies. Verse 11 says: *11 "For we who live are always being handed over to death for Yeshua's sake, so that the life of Yeshua may be revealed in our mortal body" (2Corinthians 4:11 TLV).* I believe that *Sha'ul* meant that there is an opportunity in every situation where we are challenged and have

an opportunity to stand up for Yeshua for His life to be manifested in us. We are to be overcomers over our own fleshly nature, overcoming our weaknesses, so that those around us can see the life of Yeshua in us. Then *Sha'ul* says: 17 *“For our trouble, light and momentary, is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal”* (2Corinthians 4:17-18 TLV). This is the message of the Egyptian Passover which is foreshadowed in Yeshua our Passover lamb. His death sets us free of sin, but also promises us eternal life. The troubles which we face here and now are nothing compared to the everlasting glory that we have through Yeshua. The trials and troubles which we have here and now are temporary and we are encouraged by *Sha'ul* not to concentrate on them, but to concentrate in faith on the eternal things which are promised us because of our trust in our Messiah. Our citizenship is not of this world, but of the world to come. But, our present spiritual journeys are sometimes filled with tough choices and if we really stop and think about each one, we can understand why. They give us an opportunity to grow as we continue to follow Yeshua. If ADONAI made our pathway entirely smooth, to choose Him would be too easy. But, because He has given us a share in our life's pathway, sometimes the pavement gets a little rough. But, knowing that that everlasting glory awaits us helps us to journey on through our trials. We have been chosen to live in a very important time, the closing years of the *olam hazeh*, this present age, as we await the coming of *olam haba*, the age to come, which will be ushered in by the return of Messiah Yeshua as *Melekh Mashiach*, King Messiah. This is not the time to be slack, but the time to press in for victory. As we continue our discipleship study, *The Messianic Life*, we understand that it is leading us to become better and stronger disciples of Yeshua and that we are being prepared for the days ahead. I close with the words of *Shimon Kefa*: 17 *....., be on your guard so that you are not led astray by the error of the lawless and lose your sure footing. 18 Instead, keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity! Amen.* (2Peter 3:17-18 TLV). *Shabbat shalom!*