

Doctrine of the Sign

1. The Hebrew word for sign is *toa 'owth* (oth); (in the sense of appearing); a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, etc. The word is translated in the AV as “mark”, “miracle”, “sign”, “token”.
2. The first mention of a “sign” in the Bible is when Moses spoke to God at the burning bush. The Lord would give the healing of a leprous hand to Israel as a sign that Moses was sent by Him.
 - *Exodus 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.*
3. The plagues God poured out upon Egypt leading up to the Exodus were signs to the nation of the glory and power of the Lord.
 - *Exodus 8:23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.*
4. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a sign unto the children of the Exodus generation of a divine deliverance from Egypt.
 - *Exodus 13:9 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.*
5. The keeping of the Sabbath, and all the Sabbaths, were to be a sign between the Lord and all the generations of Israel that they might know that the Lord sanctifies His people.
 - *Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.*
 - *Ezekiel 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.*
 - *Ezekiel 20:20 And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.*
6. The sign of keeping the Sabbath was to be a perpetual sign.
 - *Exodus 31:17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.*

Special Note.

The term “*forever*”, is a qualified term. There are things in the Bible which are spoken of as being “*forever*”, but they have a temporal time frame to them and therefore indicate that something shall be “*forever*” until the Lord abrogates what is being referenced. Observance of the Sabbath, and all the Sabbaths is a case in point, for with the coming of Christ the rituals and the rules of Sabbath observance have been nullified.

7. The broad plates made for a covering of the altar were to be a sign unto the children of Israel.



- *Numbers 16:38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.*
8. The death for all involved in Korah’s Rebellion became a sign of God’s judgment for rebellion against divinely established authority.
- *Numbers 26:10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.*
9. The creation of phylacteries were to be a sign of the importance of the Word of God.
- *Deuteronomy 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*
 - *Deuteronomy 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.*
10. False prophets were, and are, capable of creating false signs and wonders.
- *Deuteronomy 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;*

11. Failure in military victory is a sign of gospel disobedience to the known will of the Lord.

- *Deuteronomy 28:45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.*

12. A memorial of stones were to be set up to commemorate crossing the Jordan.

- *Joshua 4:6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?*

13. When Gideon was promised military success against the Midianites, he asked for a sign.

- *Judges 6:17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.*

14. The Israeli military used an appointed sign on the maneuvers.

- *The Sign of Smoke. Judges 20:38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city.*
- *The Sign of Speech. 1 Samuel 14:10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.*

15. To show His displeasure with Eli, a sign was given to him. His two sons would both die.

- *1 Samuel 2:34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.*

16. A prophet, a man of God, predicted the birth of Josiah by name, and gave a sign that the prophecy would be fulfilled.

- *Prophecy. 1 Kings 13:3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.*
- *Fulfilled. 1 Kings 13:5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.*

17. During the war against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, the prophet Isaiah tried to encourage the heart of King Hezekiah of Judah with a sign.

- *2 Kings 19:29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.*

18. When Hezekiah lay dying, Isaiah went and told him he would yet live. Hezekiah asked for a sign that God would heal him. A sign was given. The shadow of the sun dial moved backwards ten degrees.

- *2 Kings 20:8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?*
- *2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.*
- *2 Kings 20:9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forth ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?*

19. When King Ahaz of Judah refused to ask of the Lord a sign indicating military victory over Rezin, the king of Syria, and his ally, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, the Lord himself gave a sign. It was the sign of the virgin birth.

- *Isaiah 7:11 Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.*
- *Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

20. The prophet Isaiah predicted that “in that day” an altar to the Lord would be established in the midst of the Land of Egypt.

- *Isaiah 19:20 And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.*

21. When Isaiah walked around in public naked and barefoot for three years, he engaged in some very unusual behavior in order to be a sign to Israel.

- *Isaiah 20:3 And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;*

22. Predictive prophecy regarding agricultural production and consumption became a sign to Israel.

- *Isaiah 37:30 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.*

23. When Hezekiah was told he was going to live for fifteen more years, the word of the Lord became the sign.

- *Isaiah 38:7 And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken;*

24. A miraculous deliverance from bondage and, in poetical language, unusual changes in nature were to become an everlasting sign of God's eternal covenant with his people.

- *Isaiah 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*

25. The glory of God being manifested among the Gentile nations of the earth by the Jews was to be a sign of God's preservation of the Jews.

- *Isaiah 66:19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*

26. The creation of a fire in Beth-haccerem was to be a sign of impending destruction.

- *Jeremiah 6:1 O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.*

Special Note.

Beth-haccerem was a town in Judah with a commanding height which was used as a place for signaling on special occasions, such as an impending invasion. The area is identified today with Ramat-rahel in the southern suburbs of Jerusalem.

27. In the sixth century BC, "the Jews believed Egypt impregnable, so shut in was it by natural barriers. The Jews being 'punished in this place' will be a sign that their view is false, and God's threat true. He calls it "a sign unto you," because God's prediction is equivalent to the event, so that they may even now take it as a sign. When fulfilled it would cease to be a sign to them, for they would be dead" (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*).

- *Jeremiah 44:29 And this shall be a sign unto you, saith the Lord, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:*

28. By using the visual aids, Ezekiel predicted the impending destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

- *An Iron Pan. Ezekiel 4:3 Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.*
- *Removing Household Items. Ezekiel 12:6 In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.*

29. The prophet Ezekiel as a person became a sign to Israel.

- *Ezekiel 12:11 Say, I am your sign: like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity.*
- *Ezekiel 24:24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord God.*

30. Specific individuals who transgress the Law of the Lord can become a sign in-as-far as they are judged.

- *Ezekiel 14:8 And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

31. Because they were familiar with signs and wonders, certain Scribes and Pharisees demanded a sign of the Lord Jesus. However, the Lord refused to give them any sign except that of the prophet Jonah.

- *Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:*

32. The disciples also asked the Lord to give them a sign that what He predicted would come to pass. In response, the Lord gave them the Sign of the Son of Man in heaven. Simply put, the fulfillment of the events predicted would be the sign.

- *Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? ...30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

33. The sign of the betrayal of Christ was a kiss.

- *Matthew 26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.*

34. The birth of Christ was indicated by a sign.

- *Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

35. Christ is called a “sign” which shall be spoken against.

- *Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;*

36. The sign of physical circumcision became a seal of the righteousness of the faith.

- *Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:*

37. Speaking in tongues was to be a sign to unbelievers.

- *1 Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

38. Seven angels with seven last plagues was, to John, a great and marvelous sign of divine judgment on earth.

- *Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.*

35 Signs for Israel

The Sign	Scripture	Meaning of the Sign
• A Leprous Hand Healed	Exodus 4:8	God’s Calling of Moses
• The Plague of Flies	Exodus 8:23	God’s Favoritism of Israel
• The Feast of Unleavened Bread	Exodus 13:9	God’s Power to Deliver
• The Keeping of the Sabbaths	Exodus 31:13	God will Sanctify His People
• The Keeping of the Sabbath	Exodus 31:17	God’s Sign of a Covenant
• Broad Plate Covering	Numbers 16:38	God’s Priests
• The Death of Korah	Numbers 26:10	God’s Judgment on Rebellion
• Creation of Phylacteries	Deuteronomy 6:8	God’s Word
• Military Defeat	Deuteronomy 28:46	God’ Displeasure
• A Memorial of Stones	Joshua 4:6	Crossing the Jordan
• Consummation of Food	Judges 6:17	Promise of Military Victory
• Death of Hophni and Phinehas	1 Samuel 2:34	God’s Judgment on Eli

• The Rent Altar	1 Kings 13:3	The Birth of Josiah
• Ten Degrees Backward	1 Kings 20:9	Hezekiah would Live
• The Virgin Birth	Isaiah 7:14	Victory for King Ahaz
• An Altar to the Lord in Egypt	Isaiah 19:20	A Witness to the Lord
• The Public Nakedness of Isaiah	Isaiah 20:3	A Witness to Egypt
• Agricultural Production	Isaiah 37:30	Economic Recovery
• A Longer Life for Hezekiah	Isaiah 38:7	God's Faithfulness in Word
• A miraculous deliverance	Isaiah 55:13	God's Faithfulness to Israel
• Preaching to the Gentile Nations	Isaiah 66:19	God's Preservation of Jews
• A Sign of Fire	Jeremiah 6:1	Impending Destruction
• Death in Egypt	Jeremiah 44:29	God's Rule over all Nations
• An Iron Pan	Ezekiel 4:3	Siege of Jerusalem (586 BC)
• Household Items	Ezekiel 12:6	Going forth into Captivity
• Ezekiel himself	Ezekiel 12:11	What God will do to Israel
• Specific Individuals	Ezekiel 24:24	Under Divine Discipline
• Jonah	Matthew 12:38 – 39	The Lord's Resurrection
• The Son of Man in Heaven	Matthew 24:40	Prophecy Fulfilled
• A Kiss	Matthew 26:48	Betrayal
• Swaddling clothes	Luke 2:12	The Birth of Christ
• Christ Himself	Luke 2:34	A Object of Hatred
• Physical Circumcision	Romans 4:11	A Covenantal Seal
• Speaking in Tongues	1 Corinthians 1:22	A Message to Unbelievers
• Seven Angels	Revelation 15:1	The Last Plagues