

Drash on Bo (Exodus 10:1-13:16)

Ahavat Yeshua DC Service

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David L. Craig

Parashat [Bo](#) (בּוֹ) is the third parashat of the Book of Sh'mot (Exodus in English). The name of the parashat is from the fourth word, a verb having Strong's Hebrew Dictionary number H935 meaning *to come* or *to go*, usually by *walking*, and this context clearly means *go*. For the rest of this drash, understand any H or G followed by a number indicates the associated word's reference ID in the corresponding Strong's Dictionary for the designated language, Hebrew or Greek.

The summary in Bo's Wikipedia article is really a *précis*:

The parashah tells of the last three [plagues on Egypt](#) and the first [Passover](#).

True enough, but also remember the *departure* this book is named for in English *begins* in this parashat, which states they got as far as Sukkot. Also included are the commandments regarding the need of the Israelites to redeem their firstborn.

This first instance of *bo* in the parashat is simply a command from Adonai to Moses and Aaron regarding Pharaoh, clearly meaning *go* to him from wherever they were at that time. However, Exodus is more focused upon the idea of the Jewish people being *let go* by Egypt to leave the country for God's purposes. This is a different verb from *bo*.

Yah-a-mod, Elaine bat Benjamin Moshe. Elaine will read for us Exodus chapter 10, verse 7:

Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How much longer must this fellow be a snare for us? Let the people go and worship Adonai their God. Don't you understand yet that Egypt is being destroyed?"

Thank you, my bride.

In this verse the servants of Pharaoh advised him after he had once again refused to let the Jewish people go, this time risking an unprecedented plague of locusts. These servants had clearly become persuaded Moses' predictions of consequences for the Land of Egypt were dependable.

Before going any further, we should remember a few truths. A direct quotation spoken in a language other than that being read may have included nuances that get lost in translation. More importantly, even with the same language, the quotation does not provide information communicated via pacing, tone of voice, and body language. In this verse, the number of servants is vague. More than three might mean there was one spokesman. As there were three sentences, three servants could give voice to one sentence apiece, possibly at the same time. So, much is not written.

This verse contains the third instance in this parashat of the verb translated *let go*, which is *shalach* (נָלַחַח H7971). There are more instances of *shalach* than *bo* in this parashat—eleven versus seven. However the most instances of a verb involving going belongs to *yatsa* (יָצָא H3318) which appears 19 times and is primarily translated as *go forth*, *come forth*, *go out*, and *come out*. Furthermore, there are eleven other verbs about coming and going within this parashat for a total of 14 different verbs and 69 instances of these. This means about one in every five verbs in Parashat Bo deal with one or more people going to and fro. This is so even if we disallow the three instances of *qum* (קָמָה H6965) which means *arise* or *stand*, even though it is sometimes translated as *go out* when negated—if you do not arise or stand, you probably do not go out. In the bigger picture, while approximately one in every 25 words of this parashat is one of these 14 verbs, for the entire Tenach they thin out to about one in every 50 words—half as common, but not uncommon. This suggests Parashat Bo is indeed about comings and goings.

Use of these verbs in imperative sentences is not a rarity. As a reminder, imperative sentences have no explicit subject—it is presumed to be the person or persons being addressed. They are commands when issued by those who hold (or think they hold) legitimate authority to so command; otherwise, they are merely suggestions. However, in *this* reading, the context of the suggestion, bracketed by two apparently rhetorical questions, hints these servants were not concerned their well-being could be jeopardized by speaking so freely to their leader.

The first verse of the parashat reveals a significant backdrop to this verse: Pharaoh and his servants had been made hardhearted by God. This translation comes from coupling the verb *kabad* (כָּבַד H3513) meaning *make heavy*, *dull*, *unresponsive* with the noun *lev* or *lave* (לֵב H3820) meaning *the heart*; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect. So this may more correctly mean hardheaded, or to put it bluntly, stupid. This act of God was a consequence of Pharaoh making *himself* hardhearted in the previous parashat. Hey, you don't think this type of cause and effect could be afoot in *our* times, do you? It *would* explain a lot. Surely praying against hardheadedness in our leaders couldn't hurt.

To get more data about the meaning of *shalach* in this verse, let's look at how it was translated into Greek by the 70 Jewish scholars that produced [the Septuagint](#) about three centuries before the ministry of Yeshua. In this verse as well as seven other verses in this parashat, they wrote ex-a-po-*stel*-lo (εξαπόστειλον). As this word also appears in the New Covenant, Strong's has an entry for it (G1821) and says it means *send away*. However, it points out that has two root words: ek (ἐκ G1537) meaning *out of* or *away from*, and ap-os-*tel*-lo (ἀποστέλλω G649), meaning *send out*. Further, that word also has two roots: *apo* (ἀπό G575) meaning *separation* (sometimes *permanent*) and *stel*-lo (στέλλω G4724) meaning *avoid* or *withdraw*. So it suggests the Septuagint scholars agreed this use of *shalach* effectively means *go away and don't come back*. It took the death of his son to persuade Pharaoh to *shalach* all the Jewish people and their livestock from Egypt.

Coming and going is unsurprisingly common in the New Covenant as well. Let us consider two anecdotes, each involving Yeshua and a Gentile that came to Him requesting He command certain

unclean spirits go out of a very dear person in life-threatening circumstances. They presented Him with different reasonings in support of their petitions.

A Canaanite woman came to Yeshua clearly believing, for reasons unrecorded, that He could and would deliver her daughter from demonic torment even though she was not Jewish. Yeshua ignored her long enough for The Chosen to press Him to make her go away, then appeared to be unsympathetic more than once. Nonetheless, she steadfastly persisted, even with great wit, respectfully acknowledging she *was* in a subordinate state to the Jewish people *but* only requesting a mere speck of what He could do that would neither be missed by nor diminish the Jewish people. In the end, the demons had to go precisely when He had said, “Let it be as you desire.” This appears to have been a teaching opportunity for The Chosen.

The other Gentile was a Roman Centurion. After Yeshua stated He would go to the servant, the Centurion communicated he was not worthy that Yeshua should come under his roof (likely acknowledging his subordinate status and perhaps indicating concern the visit would defile Yeshua) and anyway it was completely unnecessary because Yeshua could simply command the healing right where He was. The Centurion then demonstrated he realized some people might need help understanding how he could think such an expectation was actually rational by immediately explaining, “For I, also, am a man under authority.” In so saying he compares his authority as a centurion to Yeshua’s as Someone authorized to issue such a command by an authority higher than the Centurion’s commander—that they both walk in the authority they have been given so long as they maintain faithful submission to those in authority over them. He elaborates with some examples regarding those under his authority. He can order one, “Go and he goes,” and another, “Come and he comes”. Thus he implies this same dynamic controls the orders Yeshua issues regarding those He has been given authority over, specifically the demonic spirits that cause infirmities and mental illnesses. The orders by either of the two need not be presented to the subordinates in person, merely conveyed—what matters is the orders are issued by one with the legitimate authority to do so. These thoughts are perfectly rational, very clearly, concisely, and respectfully conveyed—this man was in no way hardheaded.

Yeshua’s reaction to this paragraph is recorded with a verb rendered just 44 times in the New Covenant but in only two situations was Yeshua the subject, and in both cases His reaction was triggered by levels of faith (the other case involved ministry in His home town). Thou-*mad*-zo (ἐθαύμασεν G2296) is translated as *marveled*, *astonished*, or *wondered*, and is sometimes connected with negative or positive emotions. It describes a mental state induced by something surprising, unexpected, unforeseen, unlikely, unusual, maybe all of the above. Both these instances are unmodified by *very* or *greatly* so it *may* be Yeshua saw these amazing things coming. After seizing the teaching opportunity for the onlookers this discourse had afforded, Yeshua turned back to the Centurion and said, “Go; let it be for you as you have trusted.” And the demons immediately had to go from the servant just as they had to go from the Canaanite woman’s daughter.

Matthew 28 and Mark 16 contain parallel sections often called the Great Commission. The Greek word, por-*yoo*-om-a-hee (πορευθέντες G4198) is translated as some form of *go*. However, this Greek

is subtle, being rendered in the [Aorist verb tense](#). This is not a conjugation found in Hebrew or English, and there is disunity among the learned linguists regarding how this tense differs from the rest. This is the same verb the Centurion said regarding his first hypothetical subordinate, both the first word of command (though conjugated differently) and the third about the subordinate's response; thus "go, and he goes". The "he goes" part is letter-for-letter the same Greek word as in the Great Commission, which the Greek Interlinear version at biblehub.com interestingly translates as "Having gone". So Yeshua's command begins, "Having gone, therefore, make disciples..." This translation shifts the grammatical emphasis in the great command from the verb go to the verb disciple. Compare that to the non-Aorist rendering found in Matthew 10:7 when Yeshua is instructing the twelve before going out two-by-two, which the same interlinear work translates as "Going on also proclaim". This is often translated "As you go" which suggests getting to a destination is less important than the actions undertaken to influence whoever is encountered along the way.

So where am I going with all of this? Well, maybe it's a postscript.

When The LORD *personally* commands you to go or come or anything else, you need to immediately undertake some authentication. Do you know the Voice of The LORD well enough to be given such a Sovereign command? Is the indwelling Holy Spirit in full accord? Is the command congruent with your understanding of The Scriptures? If not, discuss this with The LORD as needed until all such issues are resolved. If all is in order and time permits, it probably wouldn't hurt to ask if you can run it by the shepherds that have to give account for your soul at this point in your life. If there aren't any, you should recognize you may be on dangerously thin spiritual ice, as Proverbs 11:14 (among other verses) advises:

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

It is seriously unwise to seek and offer reasons to not obey a Sovereign command that is so vetted. Consider how Moses' resistance to being sent to Pharaoh from the burning bush worked out. He garnered the ire of The Almighty, albeit a very mild antagonism, perhaps tempered by mitigating factors. But how much more amazing is it to *disobey* a Sovereign command? Jonah found himself in an unexpected submarine but King Saul paid a heavy price for his disobedient actions. Pharaoh was not the only soul self-made hardhearted by resisting the authenticated Will of God. It is always better to learn from *other* people's mistakes.

The next parashat is *B'shallach* which spans Exodus chapter 13 verse 17 through chapter 17 verse 16.