



Finger of God

Signs and the People of Israel

by Tim Kelley

This past week I've experienced one of the most spiritually awakening events I've ever experienced. As most of you know, I've been praying - as well as have many of you - that God would reveal the whereabouts of the remains of my younger brother who I had come to believe had committed suicide.

My younger brother Keith was a loner of sorts . . . a very adventurous loner. At age 17 he left home and headed for the mountains of Colorado, eventually hiking most of the Colorado portion of the Continental Divide by himself. During either his late 30's or early 40's, he singlehandedly sailed a 30+ foot trimaran sailboat from Seattle, Washington to Costa Rica (in Central America) and back. Years later, he traveled much of Europe – again, by himself.

When Keith neared 50 years old his eyes began to fail. He found he had Macular Degeneration – a disease that takes away the vision in the center of the eye. This began to cause him problems with his work as a building contractor. Keith was a perfectionist in that regard, therefore he did most of the trim work on his houses himself, but as the eyesight weakened he was unable to continue doing this. Being concerned about retirement and the distinct possibility that he might not be able to work much longer, he invested in rental property; but as the economy, especially the housing market, went into the tank, he soon found himself “upside-down” on the mortgages of those properties and with an abundance of houses on the market, he found that his rents went down to the point he was having to subsidize them in order to make his house payments.

Keith also had a problem with depression. After about 10 years of marriage, he and his wife separated due to his inability to control the depression. He also found it difficult to have a relationship with any other woman out of his concern of dragging a woman through his frequent bouts of depression.

As all these problems came together, and out of his desire to not be a burden on anyone, Keith decided to end it all. In late July, he called my oldest brother, Mike, and told him he had had enough . . . he was going to end it all. Believing that Keith was serious, Mike immediately took off for Colorado with the hopes of talking Keith out of it, but his attempts were fruitless. Keith told him that it was over for him, that he didn't want to be a burden to anyone, and that what he was getting ready to do, he was going to do in a place where he'd never be found. He told Mike goodbye, asked him to go back home to Alabama, then got in his truck and left. Mike called the police and made a missing person's report, letting them know that Keith had left in his truck, and that he had a gun and was planning to commit suicide. The police were never able to apprehend him.

I didn't immediately believe that Keith had committed suicide. He had talked about it more than once in the past 20 years, but things always improved for him and life went on. Sometimes Keith would just vanish for a year or so, and then re-appear in another town or another state. So when he called my older brother telling him he was going to do it, I passed it off. But as time went on the evidence seemed to indicate that he probably had ended his life. In November, the sheriff's department in southwestern Colorado located his truck along with some personal belongings, but after an extensive search of the area, including the use of dogs and helicopters, they were unable to find him.

In late December, Mike and my sister decided to hold a memorial service for Keith in Kansas city. Still not believing that Keith had actually died, Angie and I attended for the good of the

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family. It was a good opportunity to get together, especially since another brother was going to be there as well, a brother I had not seen for year. When we neared the time to depart for home, my sister mentioned in passing that Keith's wife had finally filed for a divorce in January of 2011, and that his attempt to rekindle a relationship with another woman had failed just days before announcing his plan to end it all. With this new (and what I would consider quite pertinent) information, I became convinced - my younger brother was dead.

Over the past few years, I've been studying and presenting topics to our fellowship pertaining to what it means to be "your brother's keeper". I had seen that the scriptures give the firstborn of a family a lot of responsibility, and that all of us are to be watching out for one another. In addition, as a result of our yearly study of the five "Books of Moses", it was clear to me that we are all God's children and as such YHVH loves us all - even those who had not turned their hearts to Him - and that in the Hebrew culture, God's children were to be buried at death. Thus in early January it became my ambition to find my brother's body and have it buried. I asked my oldest brother and my younger sister if they'd like to help search for him and they both enthusiastically agreed.

The only clue to Keith's whereabouts was the location of his truck. According to the sheriff, it was found 17 miles off the nearest paved road parked just off a field of sagebrush in a "forest" of juniper trees. The area was surrounded by canyons and mesas to the south and sagebrush to the north. Along the sides of the mesas were large boulders - some the size of a dump truck. . . plenty of places where a person could end his life without being found. I got on the Internet to see if I could find a tracker in the area who I could pay to search for him, but when I made the first call, I was connected to the San Miquel County Search and Rescue Department - the same county in which the truck was found. They put me in contact with the person who had coordinated the initial search. That person, Eric Berg, spent nearly an hour on the phone with me filling me in on all the details of the area and what they had done to locate the body. He also said that it would be next to impossible to find his body in the rugged terrain, but if I wanted to give it a try, to hold off until May since it would be impossible to get into the area because of the snow induced mud. Thus begins my story of the search for my brother and the signs that led me to his body.

For many years I was under the belief that it was wrong to ask for signs from God. Those who asked for signs were those who had little or no faith. True believers in God would simply fast, pray, and believe, but asking for signs was taboo! Only Jews and non-believers asked for signs, after all didn't Paul say -

1 Corinthians 1:22-23 ²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Was Paul saying it was wrong to ask for a sign? The text doesn't support that view, nor does the Tnakh.

The Hebrew word for sign is the word *owth* (אוֹת – Strongs' 226). It means a *sign, a signal, a distinguishing mark*. It comes from the Hebrew root word *oowth* (אָוַת – Strong's 225) which means to *consent or agree*.

The first time we see the root word *owth* is in the Dinah incident when she had a relationship with Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite. Dinah was Jacob's daughter. Jacob had recently re-located his family to the area of Shechem and was thus a stranger, whereas Hamor was a

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native. Never-the-less, when Hamor asked Jacob to allow his son to marry Jacob's daughter, He (Jacob, actually Jacob's sons) agreed (*consented*) to allow the marriage as long as the Shechemites took on the sign of circumcision.

Genesis 34:15 But in this will we consent (*oowth*) unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;

Thus, the first time we see *oowth* used, it's in regards to a sign – circumcision. In this case, the circumcision was going to give them something in common and implied that they would worship the same god, YHVH the god of the Hebrews. Thus, they would be in agreement.

The word *owth* (sign) is used very early in the scriptures -

^{KJV} **Genesis 1:14** And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

YHVH says that the sun and the moon are set in the sky for signs (*owth*). One of their purposes is to keep the yearly and monthly cycles in agreement. In addition, all plant life and most animal life is dependent on the cycle of the earth orbiting the sun. These things stay in sync – in agreement – by following the heavenly bodies. Just think of how it would be if plants and crops started their growing season at the same time some animals began their winter hibernation. You'd have a lot of starving bears. As long as the plants and animals follow the sign of the sun and moon, they stay in agreement.

God is not stingy in regards to signs. We typically see one after every afternoon rain shower.

^{ESV} **Genesis 9:12-16** And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

In this case, God placed a sign in the sky to remind Himself of the covenant He had made with mankind. We can look at the rainbow after a shower and be confident that God will not reek havoc on the entire earth with a flood ever again. Obviously, this is a good thing and a sign that we count on.

Then there's the sign of circumcision. This is a sign that God requires of us – His people. As far as I know, there's never been a boy born "pre-circumcised". It was intended as a sign that God's people are in agreement with His covenant, and that they choose to be a part of it. Of course, for the Hebrew children, circumcision was never a choice. Never-the-less, the fathers were expected to make sure to not only give their young boys that sign, but to also rear them in such a way that they'd be in agreement with the sign.

In my opinion one of the most important uses for signs is when they are given to show that YHVH is in agreement with you. After all, God would not bless the actions of someone who is in opposition to Him, would He? One of the first places we see this use of a sign is when YHVH called Moses to lead His people Israel out of Egypt. If you remember, Moses was somewhat hesitant to take on this responsibility and wondered if the people would indeed believe that he was sent by YHVH.

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ESV Exodus 3:11-12 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

So the sign God gave in support of Moses was that they would go to Sinai before going to Canaan. I'm sure this was probably more of an encouragement to Moses than it was to the Israelites. Oftentimes a person needs that encouragement when he or she is trying to do what they believe to be in service to God, but are being challenged along the way.

My search for Keith's remains started in January when I was told I'd have to wait till May to get into the area. "What could I do till then?" I asked myself. With the GPS coordinates supplied by the sheriff's department, I spent hours on Google Earth trying to get a feeling for the lay of the land. I searched for maps and pictures of the surrounding area, but found very little. The most important thing I did was to start a prayerful petition to YHWH each day. I tried my best to position my prayers during the time of the morning or evening sacrifice – either 9:00 AM or 3:00 PM. I also searched the scriptures to see if was really God's desire that his children be buried when they died. Scriptures like Genesis 3:19 came to mind.

ESV Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Other verses showed that the patriarchs of old desired to be buried; in fact many had already dug their own graves. In this passage, Joseph is pleading with Pharaoh to let him bury his father.

ESV Genesis 50:5 My father made me swear, saying, 'I am about to die: in my tomb that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me.' Now therefore, let me please go up and bury my father. Then I will return."

I saw that in pagan cultures criminals would be left out to be food for the animals -

ESV Genesis 40:19 In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head- from you!- and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you."

- but in God's culture, even criminals were to get buried.

ESV Deuteronomy 21:22-23 "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day . . .

Apparently, God is concerned about the dignity of all His children – even in death. Even the lowest criminal, should be given the honor of a decent burial . . . and my brother was not a criminal. Humans are not like possums, skunks, and lizards. They're not to become a part of the "food chain".

So I knew it was God's will for my brother to be buried, and as a brother, I knew it was his family's responsibility to see to it that it got done. Therefore, my prayers included the reminder to God that I'm wanting to fulfill my responsibility as an Israelite and a brother to find Keith's body and put it in a grave. In fact, I made great effort to remind God of what He had told us in the scripture and to convince Him that I had a legitimate case.

May finally arrived. On Tuesday morning, May 1st, I called Eric Berg at the San Miquel County Sheriff's office to let him know that it's May and I would soon be knocking on his door. Angie got home from a week-long visit to her mother's that afternoon and Wednesday morning I caught a plane to Denver. With just a short amount of time, it was my intent on this trip to scope

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out the area, not to begin the search – unless of course, I had some extra time. I was wanting to find camping areas close to where the truck was found, the availability of ATV's in the event we needed to search out in the desert, and to determine how much help we could expect from the Sheriff's Department. Eric said to meet him in Norwood, Colorado (approximately 6 hours from the airport) the next morning at 9:30 AM, so I rented a car and drove to Montrose (about an hour north of Norwood) that evening to spend the night. After a long day of travel, I was ready for some sleep, but before going to bed, I decided to ask a special prayer – one that I hoped would give me some direction the next day.

Just weeks earlier I had taught our Sabbath fellowship about the Hebrew word *yadah*, which means “give thanks”. While doing the research for the teaching I saw that the etymology of the word was that of a person with outstretched hands. That brought to mind a recent “showdown” I had had with my two year old granddaughter when she refused to eat her dinner, and how after waiting her out, she ate everything on her plate. When she got down from the table, and after I had cleaned her hands and face, she stretched out her hands to be picked up so she could give me a big hug. I could see what Yeshua meant when He said we should be like little children. After giving the teaching, I decided to begin raising my hands in prayer, though I found it difficult because of my culture.

Never-the less, as a child in a strange land, I was getting ready to undertake an endeavor that, up to this point, everyone had said would be impossible. So with outstretched hands, I asked God to help me in my endeavor if indeed it was His will for me to find Keith's body, and to give me a sign as to which way to search if the opportunity arose. I told Him that I was not real comfortable with signs, but I knew He had given Gideon the sign he had asked for, in fact - he did it twice. As a result, Gideon had the courage to lead a small band of soldiers against the army of Median.

My prayer was very specific and was for something very familiar to me . . . an airplane. I asked God to send an airplane overhead going in the direction that I should search. I didn't specify what type of airplane, just an airplane.

The next morning I met Eric in Norwood. He and another deputy briefed me on what they had found and what I was likely to get into. After gathering emergency rations, we drove separately the hour and a half drive to the spot my brother's truck was found. Though it was only about 40 miles out of Norwood, the last 17 miles was on deeply rutted and dusty dirt roads. We finally arrived at the location – an area of sage brush leading up to a juniper tree covered mesa. It was a vast area with a deep canyon to the west, a couple of steeply climbing mesas to the south and east, and sage brush for miles to the north. Between the two mesas was a reclaimed pipeline “cut” going roughly northeast to southwest. We parked just off the “cut”.

Eric showed me where my brother had parked. He pointed out areas where Keith had apparently driven into, but after deciding it was not the area he wanted to die, pull back out until finally parking where he did. He showed me the remains of the laptop computer that he had smashed and attempted to burn in a small fire pit. He showed me the scattered beer bottles he had drunk before heading off to do his final act. The only thing he couldn't show me is which way he went. Though tracks were found heading off the south, there were also tracts in every other direction but north. Figuring a person could walk for a couple of days carrying just two gallons of water (which Mike had indicated Keith took with him), Eric estimated I would have to search roughly 100 square miles.

Eric showed me some of the areas close to the truck that his department had already searched, and we searched along the pipeline cut for about 75 yards as well as in the juniper trees to the west and south, but saw nothing but some fresh (what he thought were) bear or mountain lion tracks. Since neither of us were armed, we decided we should get back closer to the vehicles. With nothing more that he could do for me, Eric drove back to Norwood, but not until reminding

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me that cell phone service was almost non-existent in that area, and admonishing me to stay off the boulders and to call him as soon as I got back on the main road . . . he didn't want two missing people out there.

I spent a few minutes sifting through the remains of Keith's smashed and burned laptop computer. Apparently, he had burned it up in order to erase any evidence of his past. Under the laptop was the charred remains of a few of his recent business cards. It appeared he had begun to use his first name - Jonathan - in his business dealings. I picked up one that was the least charred and put it in my shirt pocket. Never straying but a few yards from my car, I walked around picking up scraps of partially burned pieces of paper that had blown out of the fire. Maybe there was something on them that might indicate which way Keith went, but all the papers seemed to have come out of a builder's magazine. He had simply left no clues to his whereabouts.

Seeing the vastness of the area and the hopelessness of the situation, I fell on my knees and with outstretched arms, asked God to show me what to do. "I don't know where to search, I don't know if it's safe to search, or even if You want me to search" I exclaimed. "Show me YHWH what to do!" The previous night's request for a sign had slipped my mind, but when I got



Looking at the Pipeline Cut
from where I saw the first airplane.

up from praying, a jet airliner was passing overhead. "Interesting" I thought, as I remembered that I had asked for an airplane to be the sign to direct me to my brother's remains. Could this be a sign from God? I noticed there were other airplanes in the sky as well, but this one seemed to be bigger and it had a very long and distinct contrail ¹. "Maybe this is a sign from God" I thought. Should I follow it or dismiss it as a coincidence? I chose to follow it, after all, what could it hurt? So I took out my cell phone, hit the compass app, and noted that the plane was flying in a southwesterly direction, approximate 240 degrees.

Forgetting about the bears and mountain lions, I quickly called Angie and told her that if she didn't hear from me in one hour to call the sheriff's department. "I've got a hunch which way Keith went" I said. So I began to follow my compass. Realizing that the compass heading was the same as the pipeline cut, I move over about 20 yards to the east and followed the cut instead of going through the juniper trees. I half walked, half ran about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, searching under rocks and behind trees on each side, but mostly on the east side, of the cut. But then the pipeline veered off to the left and almost directly in front of me was the edge of a 400 foot tall mesa lined with 10 to 15 foot tall boulders. "What should I do?" I thought. "Follow the pipeline, though it veered off the heading of the airplane, or head up into the boulders?"

I once again fell on my knees and asked God to show me what to do. "If the first airplane was a sign from You, then You know I've got a decision to make. Should I turn left or go straight ahead?" Rising off my knees, I turned toward the mesa and just as I did, another airplane appeared to rise right out of the boulder-lined cliffs, again with a contrail behind it. I grabbed my camera and quickly shot a picture of it, making sure to include landmarks of where I was standing. I moved a few feet to the south and took another picture just to make sure I could find the spot again.

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Was it a sign, or was it a coincidence? Two airplanes seemed to appear right when I needed help. If it wasn't a sign, I was no closer to finding my brother than before. But I had asked for a sign, and I had asked for it to be airplanes. I had only two choices - have faith or abandon the hope of finding my brother's remains. I chose faith and headed off into the boulders. I looked around and under the rocks and boulders for any sign that my brother had been there – empty water bottles, a shirt, anything. There were so many hiding places in those rocks it would take an army to search it all out. I kept thinking about Eric's admonition to stay off the boulders, and when I spooked a nearby antelope (what if it had been a bear?), I realized the foolishness of being there by myself and thus abandoned the search, at least for that day. Though I had only climbed maybe fifty feet (in altitude) up the mesa, when I turned back toward the car, I noticed the mountains off to the east. "I bet that would be a great view from further up", I thought. But that would have to be another day. I would go home, organize a search party, and return as soon as possible.

On the way back to Denver, I decided to go up through Grand Junction instead of through Montrose. This road was much more scenic, winding through canyon after canyon. I thought to myself that somewhere along through here would be a perfect place to just "get lost" and never be found again. The area was desolate with boulders and caves in the sides of the mesas. I was sure Keith had traveled this road. In fact, just a couple of years earlier he had driven Angie and I down the highway for 20 or so miles before returning to Grand Junction, his home. "Why did he drive all the way to southwest Colorado when he could have done it anywhere along this highway? Was he familiar with the place he was going to "do it"? Maybe he had been there before, but couldn't remember exactly where it was. Maybe that's why he had pulled in a couple places before settling on the place he parked his truck.

Oftentimes it takes more than one sign to convince us that God is actually giving us a sign. Even though we cry out to God for help and deliverance, we don't believe that the God of the Universe would manipulate natural things on our behalf. As a result, we miss God's fingers working things out for us. "Who are we that God would take notice of us?"

This is a problem that Israel faced. Even though they longed for a deliverer, when the deliverer came along they could not accept it. Thus YHVH gave them signs to help their unbelief and to get their attention.

^{ESV} **Exodus 4:1** Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" ² The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." ³ And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. ⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail"- so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand- ⁵ "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." ⁶ Again, the LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. ⁷ Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your cloak." So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign." ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

It would appear that the first three plagues applied to Israel as well as Egypt in order for Israel to believe that YHVH was working through Moses and Aaron.

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David also knew the importance of signs. In a prayer for mercy in his times of trouble, David asked for a sign that would show his enemies that David was king.

^{ESV} **Psalm 86:17** Show me a sign of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Angie and I left for Colorado early on Sunday morning (May 13). It was our plan to search Monday through Thursday morning, and if we didn't find him, call it off with the satisfaction of knowing we had tried. I had loaded my pistol and rifle in the back of the truck in the event we came upon a bear or mountain lion. I didn't know if they would do any good since I'm not much of a hunter, but like an umbrella, you should always be prepared. We had hoped that some others would join us in the search, but by the previous Thursday, everyone had backed out. I had placed a call to Eric at the sheriff's department to ask if he knew of anyone in his department whom I could pay to go out there with us. I didn't want Angie and I to be searching alone. Quite co-incidentally, he was holding a search and rescue volunteers meeting that evening. He said he would mention it. The next morning a deputy called saying that even though he could not go, his brother would probably be interested in helping. He gave me his phone number and email address. His brother's name was Joshua. I called him a number of times and sent him a detailed email of what had happened so far and even included the two airplane "signs", but I never heard back from him. Thus, when Angie and I left for Colorado, we had no help; it was just going to be me and her. Though I had not mentioned it, my plan was for her to stand guard with the rifle while I searched the rocks. I was going to give her a GPS, set up so as to direct her back to the truck, in the event I got hurt. We were also going to carry walky-talkies just in case we got separated. That's all I knew to do, except of course, to believe that if God had indeed given me a sign, He would protect us in our endeavor.

On the drive to Colorado, I made a call to a fellow I knew of in Colorado to see if he could help. His wife answered the phone, but stated that he was in Denver and would not be available till Tuesday at the earliest, but my plan was to begin searching on Monday. When we neared Cortez, Colorado, the place we were going to spend the night, I saw an email on my phone. It was from Joshua, the brother of the sheriff's deputy. He said that his phone was not working correctly, but that he was at his brother's house, so call there . . . he was willing to help. I was excited. When I got into the motel room, I gave him a call. He stated that he knew the area, and he could handle a gun. He would meet me in the morning at the Basin Store - the east end of the 17 mile dirt road. My stress factor dropped by about 50 percent.

The next morning we rose early and headed for the meeting place. We met Joshua inside the Basin Store. He had gotten there early to eat breakfast and had told the proprietor about his plans for the day – helping this man find the body of his brother. When we walked in, everyone in the store had just finished praying that Joshua's day would be successful. Joshua looked to me like a boy, though he was 35 years old. He showed me his arsenal (a shotgun and 9mm handgun), and said he was ready to go. Going back inside the store for one last "civilized" potty stop, the proprietor wished us well.

Leaving the Basin Store, we crossed the highway and headed down the dirt road. To my surprise, the road wasn't nearly as bad as it was just two weeks earlier. The county had sent a road grader out to smooth the road out that morning. Hurray! Instead of the trip taking about 45 minutes, it only took about 20. I thanked YHVH for the good road and thought to my self that this has got to be more than just a coincidence. We drove the 17 miles of dirt road and parked at the place where I had seen the first airplane.

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After loading our backpacks, Joshua asked where we were going to search. I reminded him about the signs I had seen and said that I wanted to follow the signs, so we took off southward down the pipeline cut. When we got to the location of the second sign, I showed him the picture of the mesa ridge with the airplane contrail rising above it. I said "Josh, that's the finger of God. He's pointing to my brother. That's where we're going to search."

The picture showed that the contrail met the ridge in a clump of trees, so we headed for the trees, a somewhat diagonal path, searching the boulders along the way. Within 45 minutes we had climbed up about 300 feet. Joshua thought it would be a good idea to search from the ridge, so he left his backpack on a boulder and headed straight up. I placed my rifle on another boulder near his backpack and Angie and I continued the diagonal climb, searching boulders as we went. The fear of mountain lions and bears had vanished. As we neared the ridge we saw a number



The location from where I saw the second airplane contrail.
My brother's remains were located in the rocks just below the trees.

of places where the rocks formed ledges with places a person could lay in. We noticed that if a person were to do so, he would have a tremendous view of the San Juan Mountains to the east. "Did Keith climb up here after drinking a six-pack of beer?" we thought.

Just 15 feet below the ridge, I checked my bearings and saw that the clump of trees was off to our left 50 or so feet, so we continued to search below the ridge while moving south toward the trees. I was beginning to get concerned about Joshua. It had been about 30 minutes since he

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took off in a different direction than us and we had not heard from him, so I told Angie we should try to find a way to get on top of the ridge to see if we could find him. I looked up and found a clearing that would allow us to find our way to the ridge. At the same time Angie, who was just a few feet behind me, noticed a water bottle and a backpack on top a ledge. "Looks like Josh's backpack" she said, wondering if he had gone back to retrieve his and then left it higher up the mesa. I climbed up a few feet and saw it too, just off to my right. Looking past the backpack, I saw my brother's body wedged between a rock and the cliff. "It's him . . . it's Keith" I said. "Don't look."

God had led us nearly directly to my brother. With over 100 square miles of possible places to hide where you could never be found, we had found him in less than an hour and a half. When we later climbed up on the mesa, we saw that we were in the clump of trees – the same ones from which the contrail appeared to rise out of. God had heard our prayers.

I tried to call the sheriff's department, but was shaking so much that I couldn't dial in the number. Joshua, who had heard me yell that we had found him, dialed the call for me and I gave them the coordinates. I don't know whether my shaking was due to the sight of my brothers somewhat decomposed body, or if it was the thought that the God of Israel had indeed directed me to this place. I believe it was the later.

In the story of Gideon, God gave him three signs. The first one was a sign of God's choosing, but after it was given Gideon was afraid to do what God had instructed him to do, so he took helpers with him and did it at night. The next two signs were of his own choosing – the fleece and the dew. After he received these signs, he had the courage to face the entire army of Midian with just 300 men.

Though I am certainly no expert on signs, I've learned a lot through this experience.

1. Signs and prayer are intertwined
 - a. Ask for something that you believe would be God's will – He must agree
 - b. Be specific in your desires
2. Signs help build faith
3. Be specific when asking for a sign – something clearly recognizable
4. Believe that YHVH has given you a sign, then act as if He had

God gave us the story of the Exodus, the story of Gideon, as well as many other stories to show us how He wants to work with us. These stories are for our admonition . . . we should use them, not just read them. I've been blessed to discover this exciting way God wants to help us in our faith. I hope you can be blessed as well.

Shalom Alechem