



February 2012



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Dearly Beloved in Yeshua,

Marriage in the Mind of God

When the month of February comes each year, the thoughts of most people turn to love and romance, especially in our secular, post-Judeo-Christian society. Our thoughts, and we sense, God's thoughts, turn to marriage. This has led us to study and re-think marriage from a biblical, Hebrew mindset. We have sought the Lord concerning a number of married couples found in the pages of the Holy Scriptures to see what we might glean from studying their lives. Each couple seemed to narrow our focus on one aspect of marriage as expressed in a Hebrew word.

Adam and Eve: YADAH

In Genesis chapter 2, we read that God put the man He had created in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. His assignment from the very beginning was to work, but something was missing: support and encouragement. *"And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" (Gen 2:18)* So the LORD caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and made woman from one of his ribs. God then brought the woman to Adam. *"And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.'" (Gen 2:23)*

This is the beginning of marriage in the Holy Scriptures. It was God's idea, not Adam's. God was intimately involved in the process. Marriage was a joining of male and female, *ish* and *ishah*. The woman was created to meet man's need. He needed a helper, a God-given mate. The marriage relationship would be unlike any other: *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall be one flesh."* (Gen 2:24) One flesh in Hebrew is *basar echad* and implies not only a physical oneness, but emotional and spiritual as well.

The "one-flesh" relationship of Adam and Eve included a depth of intimacy (into-me-see) that is expressed by the Hebrew word YADAH. *"Now Adam knew (yadah) Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, 'I have gotten a man from the LORD'."* (Gen 4:1) You might wonder, "What did God have to do with it?" In Hebrew thought, man and woman are co-creators with God when a child is conceived. The verb YADAH is seen in Scripture when a man comes together with a woman in a covenant union that has God's approval. When it is an illicit relationship, the Bible says that he "lay with" her. Commitment makes the difference, specifically commitment before God.

In Marriage Covenant by Derek Prince, the author states that God's ultimate purpose for marriage is that a man and a woman come to know each other. "It is not merely intellectual, as we normally understand knowledge in contemporary terminology, nor is it merely sexual. It is total, unreserved opening up of each personality to the other. It embraces every area—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual."

Adam knew the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit offered to him by his wife, Eve. And yet he ate it, partaking of her sin, and sealing his fate with hers. Adam was wrong, AND YET, he presents

us with a moving picture of Yeshua, our Messiah, who chose to take our sin upon Himself, so that we might not be eternally separated from Him. That could be one of the reasons why He is called the "Last Adam." Isn't the goal of our Messiah's sacrifice for us a *YADAH* relationship? The Apostle Paul said, "*That I may know Him...*" (Phil 3:10) Yeshua Himself made a proclamation before His death: "*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Yeshua HaMashiach whom You have sent.*" (Jn 17:3) This is the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 which includes, "*...for they all shall know (YADAH) Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*" (Jer 31:34)

Isaac and Rebekah: AHAVAH

It is interesting to note that the first reference to love, *ahavah*, in the Bible is the love of a father for his son (Abraham and Isaac). The second reference is to the love of a man (Isaac) for a woman (Rebekah). (Gen 24:67) Their marriage is the first monogamous marriage on record. She is considered the first Jewish bride. This marriage was initiated by the groom's father, Abraham, who sent his most trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac from among his relatives. Eliezer, the servant, encountered Rebekah at a well. Her actions merit her the distinction of being the prototype of what a Jewish wife should be. She was, after all, the woman who would become the mother of the Jewish nation. Rebekah, to this day, is esteemed for her purity of character, goodness of heart, and *g'milut hesed*, her acts of love extended to others (including giving water to the ten camels that came with Eliezer).

The type of love, *ahavah*, that Rebekah displayed is expressed more fully by the Hebrew word *hesed*, which means feeling another's discomfort and pain. *Hesed* is demonstrated through action. A person with *hesed*, like Rebekah, is compassionate, selfless, and giving. The opposite of *hesed* is selfishness—the major cause of marriage breakups today. Jewish thought rejects the notion that marriage should be characterized by a relationship of "give and take." The Jewish idea of love is instead "give and give."

What about Isaac? When Abraham's servant told Isaac how God had led him to Rebekah (Gen 24:66), we read, "*...Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her.*" (Gen 24:67) We see an interesting Hebrew concept of marriage in this verse. Isaac loved the woman he married, rather than marrying the woman he loved. This is how it was with arranged marriages. When a man and woman believed that God had joined them together, they trusted Him to help love grow and flourish in their union. Marvin Wilson, in [Our Father Abraham](#), mentions the conceptual difference between the ancient Near East and the modern West concerning marriage: "We put cold soup on the fire, and it becomes slowly warm. You put hot soup into a cold plate, and it becomes slowly cold." Wilson continues with..."It is this very emphasis on the need for love to grow warmer and to mature after the couple are joined that undergirds the Biblical Hebraic concept of marriage."

Isaac left his father and mother to cleave to Rebekah, and they became *echad*, one flesh. In [Love, Marriage and Family](#) by Michael Kaufman, the oneness of genuine love in Jewish thought is alluded to through the numerical equivalence of Hebrew letters. The numerical equivalent of *ahavah*, love, is thirteen and the numerical equivalent of *echad*, one, is also thirteen. The thirteen of *ahavah* and the thirteen of *echad* fuse into twenty-six, the numerical equivalent of God's name, **יהוה**, the Tetragrammaton. Therefore, the Jewish sages teach that when a couple achieves the oneness of genuine love, God comes down and dwells with them. We would say that God dwelling in the heart of both the man and woman makes it possible for the couple to achieve the oneness of genuine love. God is love. (1John 4:8) We can love because He first loved us. (John 15:16)

Jacob and Rachel: DABAR

The marriage of Jacob and Rachel exemplifies the Hebrew concept of *DABAR*, which can mean word, speech, event or commandment, but in the case of Jacob, it meant PROMISE. Biblical Hebrew

has no special word for "promise," so when *dabar* is used to express this idea, it implies something of substance—a pledge of good faith to keep one's word. Such was the case with Jacob and Rachel. We read in the Bible that Jacob kept his promise to his father, Isaac, to take as his wife one of his mother's brother's daughters. On the way to *Padam Aram*, Jacob had a powerful encounter with God at Bethel. He made a promise there to God, including a pledge to one day return to the land of his fathers. Shortly thereafter, Jacob met Rachel coming to water her father's sheep at a well. He watered the flock for her, *"then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son."* (Gen 29:11-12)

Laban, Rachel's father, initially welcomed Jacob as "my bone and my flesh," but he did not prove to be a man of his word. Laban had two daughters, Leah, the elder, and Rachel, the younger. *"Now Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, 'I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter'."* Laban agreed. *"So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days to Him because of the love he had for her."* (Gen. 29:20) This is one of the most romantic verses in the Holy Scriptures. Jacob had to serve seven more years following a deception by Laban in which he brought Leah instead of Rachel to Jacob on their wedding night. During those seven years, Jacob had two wives, Leah and Rachel, and lots of *tzurris* (trouble) since Leah bore children and Rachel did not. We read about their marital discord in Genesis chapter 30. Rachel eventually had two sons and Jacob kept his word and returned to Canaan, the land of his fathers, with Rachel and Leah. Rachel died in childbirth and was buried in Bethlehem. But for the rest of his life, Jacob loved their two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, more than his other ten sons. We can learn from Jacob to keep the promises we make before God. Love deeply and keep your word.

Boaz and Ruth: EMUNAH

Ruth, a young Moabitess, and Boaz, an older, esteemed Israelite, are an unusual match made by the Divine *Shadkhan* (Matchmaker), God, for His eternal purposes. The Lord chose two people with the salient quality of faithfulness (*emunah*) to be the forebears of the House of David, the lineage of Yeshua the Messiah. Most of us are familiar with their story. Ruth, a young widow, insists on returning to Bethlehem with Naomi, her mother-in-law, while her sister, Orpah, decides to remain in Moab with her own people. Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi, to Naomi's God, the God of Israel, as well as her kindness (*hesed*) impress all who come in contact with her—especially Boaz. Ruth's confession of love for Naomi has been incorporated over the centuries into countless marriage ceremonies: *"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."* (Ruth 1:16-17)

While Ruth said this to Naomi, this same *emunah* would surely characterize her marriage to Boaz. Boaz encouraged Ruth to *"stay close"* (Ruth 2:8) and Ruth *"stayed close"* (Ruth 2:23) as he requested. Marriages work when couples *"stay close."* Faithfulness is crucial to the success of marriage. Ruth was not the only faithful one. Boaz was faithful to perform his role as kinsman redeemer. Together, they present us with a beautiful picture of marital fidelity and the blessing of God that accompanies it.

Yosef and Miriam: B'RIT

The traditional Jewish marriage ceremony is a two-part covenant or *b'rit*. The first part, *kiddushin* or betrothal, also means sanctification, and is the hallowing of a man and woman in a sacred bond. When the Brit Hadasha tells us that *Miriam* (Mary) was betrothed to *Yosef* (Joseph) in Matthew 1:18, this meant that they had entered into covenant and were set apart for one another. Miriam was considered an *eshet ish*, a married woman, but sexual relations were strictly prohibited until the second part of the covenant, *nissuin*, or hometaking, occurred. Maurice Lamm in **The Jewish Way in Love and Marriage** explains *kiddushin* and *nissuin* as follows: *"Kiddushin connects two equals, man*

and woman, in a relationship as husband and wife. Nissuin, which also means elevation, connects husband, wife, and God in a permanent commitment."

It is understandable that Yosef would have been devastated to learn that his betrothed was pregnant. They had entered into a solemn and sacred agreement which included the understanding that each no longer lived for himself or herself but for the other. An angelic intervention convinced Yosef that Miriam had not broken the marriage covenant. They both honored that covenant, at great personal expense, enduring scorn, ridicule, and rejection. Of all couples in Scripture, Yosef and Miriam best understood the truth that covenants are made on the basis of a sacrifice.

What about Love and Romance?

We celebrate forty-one years of marriage on February 7, 2012 and firmly believe that the place for romance is within the context of marriage. Society has turned it around and made the place for romance before marriage. This leads to immorality and the weakening of marital love and the institution of marriage itself. The crucial element in marriage which is most often left out today is GOD, the Originator of marriage. God makes true love, self-sacrifice, faithfulness, stability, and covenantal commitment possible in a marriage. We believe that He is a Great Romantic, encouraging husbands and wives to delight in each other. We intend to still walk together, holding hands, years from now, when Neil is in his 80's and Jamie in her 70's, God willing, because of God, His grace, and our lifelong commitment to each other. Ecclesiastes 4:12 is so true: "...a *threefold cord is not quickly broken.*" One man. One woman. And God!

Yeshua Loves His Bride!

We would like to encourage you to purchase a few copies of our booklet, The Ancient Jewish Wedding Customs... and the Return of Messiah for His Bride. We wrote it just after our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary which we celebrated in Jerusalem. It explains the connections between both themes in the title. It will make a perfect gift for someone who is married, or contemplating marriage, or who is married to Yeshua, and you will surely want to keep a copy for yourself. It is also an excellent outreach tool to give to a pre-believing Jewish friend.

Love in the Lover of our Souls,

P.S. Good news! Jewish Jewels can now be seen on the WORD network as well as on a new day and time on Christian Television Network (CTN) and WCLF. Please see the purple airtimes below for new local, satellite and cable airings. Our weekly program is also available on our website: www.jewishjewels.org

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THU 11:30 AM	FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45
SUN 1:30 PM	FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45
SAT 10:30 PM	FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61
SUN 2:30 PM	GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16
SUN 1:30 PM	IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40
SUN 1:30 PM	MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25
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Dish Network

MON 8:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)



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