

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.11.2

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapters 3-4 of the book *The Marriage Covenant*.

When a person begins to perceive the parables God has placed in creation, the study of the Bible becomes a much more vibrant and exciting book. This is certainly true when one considers the subject of marriage, as we are doing in this current book series.

I encourage you to begin to look at all the things God has created around you as having a very deliberate design. This design is intended to convey hidden spiritual truth by means of that which is observ-

able.

How many people are able to look at the life cycle of a caterpillar as it transforms into a butterfly and see God's plan of redemption and future glory? How many can see spiritual truth in the parable of a seed that must fall into the ground and die that it might enter into a greater life?

There are mysteries all around us. There are parables in the air we breathe and the process of respiration. There are parables in the functioning of all the various organs of the body. There are parables in the long and glorious hair that adorns a

woman and the beard of a man.

What is the benefit of perceiving these things? They all teach us things about ourselves and about the kingdom of God. By understanding parables we may be able to discern spiritual matters that would otherwise be difficult to grasp.

There are parables in the Bible from the opening sentence of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. You will never exhaust the endless parables that are set everywhere around you. The search for understanding is a lifelong quest. Get understanding while you can.

Food for Thought

"We seldom realize fully that we are sent to fulfil God-given tasks. We act as if we were simply dropped down in creation and have to decide to entertain ourselves until we die. But we were sent into the world by God, just as Jesus was. Once we start living our lives with that conviction, we will soon know what we were sent to do."

Henri J. M. Nouwen

Scripture Memory

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Parables Newsletter

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The Marriage Covenant

Foundation Stone Three - Lawful Polygamy

I am certain that the title of this chapter will cause many an eyebrow to be raised, but it is necessary to understand what the Scriptures teach concerning a man having more than one wife in

I am not seeking to declare that which is socially acceptable...

order to understand the topic of divorce, remarriage, and adultery. I feel as strongly the influence of the culture I am a part of as any man. There is ever a tendency

to look upon issues with a very nearsighted focus. We expect that our experience is the same as all men in all cultures at all times, but we are far from the truth when we assume such things.

This teaching is focused upon a BIBLICAL concept of the marriage covenant. I am not seeking to declare that which is socially acceptable, nor the orthodox teaching of the hour. My desire is to know the mind of Yahweh, and to accurately disclose it. I am very much in debt to those who have been praying for me that I might have insight and understanding in these matters, for even as recently as yesterday afternoon, I had no thought about writing this particular chapter. However, after the Father divinely ordered my steps and conversation last night, I find that this is most certainly a part of this teaching that cannot be skipped over. To do so will lead to many erroneous conclusions.

In sharing some of these things with my daughter Kristin last night, she commented, “Dad, that is wacky!” What I will share is truly out of synch with the mindset of the culture we live in. Neither are these things taught in the church. I do not doubt, therefore, that some will experience a similar reaction to that of my daughter. I only ask that you test all that is shared here against Scriptures, taking the word of God as the measure of truth, rather than our common experiences.

Throughout the Old Testament we find that polygamy was practiced on a frequent basis. Polygamy can refer to either a man or a woman having more than one spouse, however, only a man was allowed to have more than one spouse in Scriptures. The woman who had more than one spouse was considered an adulteress, and under the Law of Moses the penalty for adultery was death by stoning. The first mention of a man with more than one wife is found as early as the fourth chapter of Genesis.

Genesis 4:19-20

And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah.

There is nothing in this verse indicating whether this act of polygyny (a *man* having more than one wife) was approved, or disapproved by God. It is simply mentioned as a statement of fact.

One of the next mentions of a man having more than one wife is in the life of Abraham. When Sarah was barren, and advancing in age, she suggested to her husband Abraham that he take her handmaiden, Hagar the Egyptian, and go in to her to raise up offspring. Hagar, in this way became the wife of Abraham. Some may argue that Abraham having sexual relations with Hagar, did not make her his wife, yet the Scriptures reveal that women who entered into relationships with a man in this way were indeed considered to be the wife of the man.

Two generations after Abraham, we read of Jacob marrying two sisters, Leah and Rachel. Each of these sisters had a handmaid which they likewise presented to Jacob to raise up offspring. These handmaids were Zilpah and Bilhah, and the Scriptures name them as the “wives” of Jacob.

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Genesis 37:2

Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of **Bilhah** and the sons of **Zilpah, his father's wives**.

We also read that Esau, the brother of Jacob, had more than one wife.

Genesis 36:2-3

Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter.

In these Scriptures we find that the practice of having more than one wife led to problems. Sarah became jealous of Hagar when Hagar began acting proudly upon bearing Abraham a son. Sarah treated Hagar harshly, and Hagar was later sent away with her son.

Although Jacob had not intended to marry Leah, being deceived by her father Laban, the fact that he took two sisters as wives led to great friction between them. The practice of a man marrying sisters was later forbidden in the Law of Moses, but the Law would not be given for another 400 years.

Leviticus 18:18

And you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive...

It should be noted here, that even though the Law forbid a man to marry sisters, it did not forbid a man to have more than one wife. Indeed, the Law addressed various issues that arose from a man who should take more than one wife, thereby allowing the practice while setting up guidelines for

its practice.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17

If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the first-born son belongs to the unloved, then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the first-born before the son of the unloved, who is the first-born. But he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the first-born.

Throughout the history of Israel, after the Law had been given, we read of numerous examples of men having more than one wife. There is never any prohibition of the practice, though it often led to problems.

The practice of a man marrying sisters was later forbidden...

We read of an Israelite from the tribe of Ephraim, a descendant of Joseph, who had more than one wife.

I Samuel 1:1-2

Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah... And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Hannah, of course, would eventually give birth to Samuel, the great prophet of Israel.

Another prominent mention during the time before the kings was of Gideon.

The Marriage Covenant

Judges 8:30-31

Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, **for he had many wives**. And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.

It was during the time of the kings, however, that we see the practice of men having more than one

The practice of a man having more than one wife was never prohibited.

wife at its greatest excess. A man who was made king would attain to a greater wealth than other men, and would be able to support a great household. Yah-

weh, foreseeing this, gave Moses instruction concerning kings, though Israel would not have a king until hundreds of years later.

Deuteronomy 17:14-17

"When you enter the land which Yahweh your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom Yahweh your God chooses... Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself..., **neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away**; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself."

Notice that each of these commands deals with excess, with the thought that excess in any of these areas will lead to a man turning his heart away from God. A king who has a great many horses will place his trust in his great army, rather in Yahweh to protect him. A man who is greatly increased in wealth will tend to become proud, resulting in an absence of a proper fear and humility before God. The man who multiplies wives, increasing them abundantly, will turn his heart away from pleasing God, to pleasing his wives, a situation that was demonstrated in the life of king Solomon.

We find in the Law delivered to Moses by Yahweh that the practice of a man having more than one wife was never prohibited. Rather, it was governed, in that certain instructions were given to establish guidelines for the conduct of a man who had multiple wives. Many who were declared righteous by Yahweh had more than one wife.

The Bible names the sons of David (and one daughter) that were born to seven wives. It also mentions that David had concubines.

I Chronicles 3:1-9

Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the first-born was Amnon, by **Ahinoam** the Jezreelitess; the second was Daniel, by **Abigail** the Carmelitess; the third was Absalom the son of **Maacah**, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth was Adonijah the son of **Haggith**; the fifth was Shephatiah, by **Abital**; the sixth was Ithream, by his wife **Eglah**. Six were born to him in Hebron, and there he reigned seven years and six months. And in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four, by **Bath-shua (Bathsheba)** the daughter of Ammiel; and Ithar, Elishama, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine. All these were the sons of David, **besides the sons of the concubines**; and Tamar was their sister.

Beyond this, David also had Michal, the daughter of King Saul, as his wife, but no children arose from the union, which is a profound parable in itself. In his old age, David also took the young maiden Abishag as his wife, though he was never sexually intimate with her (I Kings 1:1-4).

David did not transgress in taking any of these women as wives, other than Bathsheba. With Bathsheba David committed adultery, for she was the wife of another man. David did not put Bath-

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sheba away after God confronted him with his sin, for by this time Bathsheba's husband had been murdered. Therefore, she was no longer in an active state of adultery. She had only David as her husband.

It is very important to note that this is the reason David was able to keep Bathsheba as his wife. Had her husband Uriah been living, Bathsheba and David would continue in adultery as long as they were together. Yet through Uriah's death, Bathsheba was no longer bound to a man and was able to marry David. Even though David conspired to put Uriah to death, when David repented and God put away his sin, the righteousness of Yahweh did not require David to put away Bathsheba as his wife. Indeed, Yahweh later blessed their union through the birth of Solomon, whom Yahweh named Jedidiah, "Beloved of Yah."

That David, and consequently all other men who had more than one wife, were not considered transgressors for the sake of having more than one wife, is revealed in the words of God through the prophet Nathan when he was sent to confront David with his adultery and murder.

II Samuel 12:8-9

"I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!"

What Yahweh is declaring here is that He had taken the kingdom, and all that goes with it, from Saul, and had given it to David. With the kingdom came the rule of all Israel and Judah, the wealth of the nation, and the ability to maintain a large house with many wives. Yahweh is not saying that He gave King Saul's actual wives to David, for we have David's wives named, and none of them are from among Saul's wives. What

Yahweh has declared is that He had abundantly blessed David by giving him those things that had formerly pertained to Saul, including a large house and many wives. If therefore, Yahweh has given these things to David, and would have given him more, we cannot judge the state of having more than one wife as a transgression of the will of Yahweh.

This leads us to make a distinction in that which is considered adultery for a woman, and adultery for a man. A man does NOT commit adultery by having more than one wife. A man commits adultery by having ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE. This is always the definition of adultery for a man in Scripture.

A man does NOT commit adultery by having more than one wife.

Leviticus 18:20

And you shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her.

Leviticus 20:10

If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Deuteronomy 22:22

If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman...

A woman, on the other hand, is always considered an adulteress if she has more than one husband. She is also considered an adulteress, if while married to a husband, she has sexual relations with a man other than her husband.

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Romans 7:2-3

For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress...

Due to the influence of the culture we live in, and the absence of an understanding of divine government, and of male and female roles as determined by God at the time of creation, I know that stating this matter in this way will provoke a

The man who has just one wife may be an adulterer.

strong emotional response among some Christians. Yet, we are called to "rightly divide the word of God." In doing so we must agree that Yahweh permitted

a man to have more than one wife, while He did not ever permit a woman to have more than one husband.

When one "rightly divides the word of God" they will understand that a man can have more than one living wife and not be considered an adulterer in the eyes of God. Such a man is not even considered a transgressor. Yet the man who has just one wife may be an adulterer, for if the woman has previously been married to another man who is yet living, both the woman and the man who takes her as wife are in a state of adultery.

The reason Yahweh allowed men to have more than one wife, while not allowing women to have more than one husband, pertains to their creation.

I Corinthians 11:8-9

Man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for

the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

I Corinthians 11:7

Man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

Man was created to be the image and glory of God. As such, man fulfills a role in the creation that is patterned after His creator. God may have multiple worshipers, and may be in spiritual union with many men. Yet man cannot have many gods. If a man takes to himself a god other than Yahweh, he is declared to be an idolater. Idolatry is everywhere throughout Scriptures compared to adultery.

Ezekiel 23:36-37

Moreover, Yahweh said to me, "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare to them their abominations. For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands. **Thus they have committed adultery with their idols...**"

Hosea 1:2

When Yahweh first spoke through Hosea, Yahweh said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry; **for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking Yahweh.**"

Even as the man was created to be the image and glory of God, and man can have only one God, without any exceptions, so it is between the man and the woman. The woman was created for man. Woman is the glory of man as man is the glory of God. Woman can only have one husband, even as man can have only one God. There can be no exceptions. If a woman has more than one husband she shall be called an adulteress even as a man who takes another God besides Yahweh will AL-

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WAYS be an idolater.

Yahweh speaks in very similar terms of His jealousy toward man, and a man's jealousy toward his wife. One is patterned after the other.

Exodus 34:14

You shall not worship any other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...

Numbers 5:29-31

This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, being under the authority of her husband, goes astray and defiles herself, or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before Yahweh, and the priest shall apply all this law to her. Moreover, the man shall be free from guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt.

Yahweh considered it a righteous thing for a man to be jealous of his wife. A man was righteously angry if his wife went astray and defiled herself by having sexual relations with another. The penalty for such a transgression was death.

Lest some should say this seems unfair, they should note that this is a perfect parallel to the man who defiled himself by joining himself to an idol. Yahweh was righteously indignant for man to do such a treacherous thing. The penalty for idolatry was the same as the penalty for adultery. The man who joined himself to another god would be put to death.

This point must be established in order to understand the issues of divorce, remarriage and adultery. A man was never considered an adulterer for having more than one wife, and this is true to this day. He is only an adulterer if he has taken to himself another man's wife. This has been true

from the beginning of the creation, and it has not changed during the church age. As long as the creation remains, the patterns established in the creation will continue unchanged.

The man who joined himself to another god would be put to death.

In the New Testament, there is no condemnation of Christian men having more than one wife. The practice, however, is prohibited if a man desires to serve in a position of leadership in the church.

I Timothy 3:2-3

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, **the husband of one wife**, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.

I Timothy 3:12

Let deacons be husbands of one wife...

Titus 1:5-9

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, **the husband of one wife**, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

These instructions about the appointment of overseers, deacons and elders were only neces-

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sary because ***there were men in the church who had more than one wife***. Some men were living with more than one wife. Others had divorced a wife and taken another, and were therefore the husband of more than one living wife. In both cases, God viewed them as having more than one wife. In neither case was this considered adultery, or even fornication, for as we have observed, man was never forbidden to have more than one wife.

Why then, did the apostle Paul give as a requirement for spiritual office that a man must have only one wife? The reason is that the man is a role model for the church, and as a role model he

A Christian man does not commit adultery by having more than one wife, but his interests are divided.

must exercise self-control and moderation in all things. A man was not declared a transgressor to have more than one wife, but the man with more than one

wife demonstrated an inordinate attention to earthly matters that was not suitable for one who would stand in a spiritual office. The apostle elsewhere speaks of marriage as being a distraction to pure devotion to God.

I Corinthians 7:32-34

But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided.

If you look at the context of Paul's words concerning qualifications for elders and overseers, you will observe that the issue of moderation and self-control is predominant. Paul says a man must be "temperate," which is to say, "showing moderation," and this statement immediately follows his instructions regarding having one wife. A temperate man, demonstrating moderation, will not seek to have many wives. His focus will

be upon the things of God rather than the things of the world.

The apostle Paul then goes on to speak of other areas in which those who are leaders in the church must demonstrate moderation, including their attitude toward drink, toward money, and in their abstaining from an excess of anger.

A Christian man does not commit adultery by having more than one wife, but his interests are divided. He must consider how to please his wives, as well as how to please God. The more wives he has, the less able he is to devote himself to spiritual things.

I do not doubt that what has been stated here, namely that a Christian man is permitted to have more than one wife, will appear to some as error. The society we live in exerts a very strong influence upon our thoughts and opinions. What I am setting forth is a Biblical world view, not a present day world view. There are many discrepancies between current practice and values and the word of God, and these differences extend even to the church. The church has abandoned the admonition to "rightly divide the word of God." The members of the church judge many things by the counsel of their own souls.

Whether the church and society recognizes it or not, polygamy is practiced by a great number of people in Western society. Polygamy, by God's definition, is the law of the land in America. How is this so? Western society condones divorce and remarriage. The numbers of divorced and remarried people is very high, indeed the number of people practicing serial polygamy in the West exceeds those practicing polygamy in other societies where it is an acceptable custom.

In the eyes of God, a man and woman who are married and then divorce, are yet married. The

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only thing that can terminate the marriage is death.

Romans 7:1-2

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

Paul is speaking here of the Law of God, not the law of man. The Law of God says a man and woman who have entered into the covenant of marriage continue in that marriage as long as they both shall live. Though the laws of the nations today declare otherwise, we must agree with God. Therefore, any man who divorces, and then takes another wife while his first wife yet lives, is a polygamist. If the second wife has never been married, then he is only a polygamist, and not an adulterer. Yet, if she was formerly married, and her spouse is living, the man and the woman are both polygamists and adulterers. This is the teaching of the word of God.

Keep in mind, a man being a polygamist, though looked upon as a great transgression in many societies today, is nowhere condemned by God. The Law of God provided guidelines for men who took more than one wife, but never forbade them from doing so. A man may be a Christian today and have more than one wife, but he cannot be an elder, overseer, or deacon. These positions require a devotion to God that is not possible when a man has multiple wives to care for, nor is he demonstrating a pattern of moderation and self-control.

We see then, that in God's eyes the nations we live in (I live in America) have declared polygamy to be legal, and many men (and women) are practicing polygamists. They have married more than

one spouse, and these spouses are living. We must judge things as God judges them. Whereas the Law of God permitted a man to have more than one wife, it never permitted a man to have another man's wife, yet man's government permits this today.

I know that many will ask, "Well what about Christ's words in Matthew?"

Matthew 5:32

"But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, **except for the cause of unchastity**, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

The question arises, "Is not a man, or woman, allowed to divorce a spouse and marry another, if their spouse has been unchaste? Are they therefore NOT considered adulterers if the spouse violated the marriage covenant by having sexual intercourse with another?" These questions will be answered later in this series.

It is necessary to lay one foundation stone at a time in order to "rightly divide the word of God" and arrive at the mind and counsel of Yahweh. We laid three stones thus far: Understanding blood covenant; Understanding the body as the temple; and Understanding the lawfulness of a man having more than one wife. The fourth foundation stone to be laid will be Understanding that the soul is in the blood.

Whereas the Law of God permitted a man to have more than one wife, it never permitted a man to have another man's wife.

The Marriage Covenant

Foundation Stone Three Continued - Plural Marriage

Before moving forward to speak on the relation between blood and the soul, I believe it is needful to speak somewhat further on the subject just disclosed, which is polygamy. Admittedly, this is a subject that is new to me in that I have never taught on it before. Before this week, I had never looked at the matter in any depth.

As I have looked further into this topic I have found that there are Christians who practice polygamy today, even in America. My daughter told

There are some who prefer the counsel of God to the orthodoxy of men.

me of a friend of hers who is returning from Alaska. While there she met many woman who wear headcoverings, clothe themselves in modest dress, and are in

plural marriages. Many prefer to speak of the practice of polygamy as "Plural Marriage," for the word polygamy has become stigmatized by society.

As I have continued to ponder this topic, I have observed further instances of it in the Scriptures. I have also considered some Scriptures that are difficult to understand, which some view as a denunciation of a man having more than one wife. I believe these Bible passages should be shared before moving forward.

I am hopeful that those reading these teachings will test all that has been set forth. I wish that all would be as the noble Bereans, searching the Scriptures, while inviting the Spirit of Christ to guide them. I do not mind having any teaching challenged. Indeed, I have often encouraged the saints to be diligent in their personal examination of all things that their understanding might rest upon the testimony of God rather than the testimony of man.

I have received much encouragement in these teachings by those who want to know what the Scriptures declare. There are some who prefer the counsel of God to the orthodoxy of men, even when God's counsel is unpopular. One brother in Christ wrote me the following:

I wanted to send you a quick note of encouragement, because I can only imagine the flak that you are going to receive over the most recent Parables Blog post regarding polygamy and adultery as defined by the Word of truth. If most have not done so already, you will most surely be called a heretic now! Yet, I know that you speak the truth and I love you for it and will continue to stand with you as long as you continue to seek to correctly divide the word of God, not caring what men may think. I was reminded of the following testimony that the Pharisee spoke of Jesus. I think it rings true of you as well even though the Pharisee's motives in making these statements were not genuine. Still, what they spoke about Christ was true --

Matthew 22:16

*They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and **that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men**, because you pay no attention to who they are.*

Mark 12:14

*They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. **You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.** Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"*

Luke 20:21

*So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and **that***

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you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

It is ever my desire to teach the word of God without partiality, prejudice, or the fear of man. I appreciate the sincere comments and questions that I have received. Yahweh has encouraged me greatly to press on with this teaching. I will share a few additional insights pertaining to the allowance Yahweh has made for a man to have more than one living wife. First I will mention an instance in which Yahweh portrays Himself as having more than one wife.

Ezekiel 23:1-4

The word of Yahweh came to me again saying, "Son of man, ***there were two women, the daughters of one mother***; and they played the harlot in Egypt. They played the harlot in their youth; there their breasts were pressed, and there their virgin bosom was handled. And their names were Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister. ***And they became Mine, and they bore sons and daughters.*** And as for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah."

Without question, Yahweh would never set forth an image of Himself as an adulterer. Therefore, it must be concluded that the example He has used here is not to be construed as adultery. The righteousness of Yahweh is not impugned in any way by this analogy.

A further example is found in the Law which Yahweh delivered to Moses. This is related to the subject of the kinsman redeemer. If a man took a wife, and he died before having offspring, his name would be cut-off from the land. This was considered a great tragedy. To prevent this from occurring, the brother of the deceased man was instructed to take his wife, and to raise up seed for the deceased. The firstborn, in this way, would take the name of the dead brother, and be

considered his descendant. Any further sons and daughters would belong to the living brother.

Deuteronomy 25:5-6

"When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the first-born whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel."

Note here that there is no mention whatsoever of the living brother being required to be single. It would very often happen to be the case that the only living brother, or brothers, would already be married. Despite this fact, these men were to take the brother's wife to be their own, and to raise up seed for the deceased. We can therefore observe that there were times when Yahweh REQUIRED a man to take another wife.

It is ever my desire to teach the word of God without partiality, prejudice, or the fear of man.

A similar, albeit far less noble, example is found in the laws pertaining to a man who saw a virgin and lusted after her. Should this man force the virgin to have sexual relations with him, upon being found out, he was required to marry the maiden.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

"If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days."

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Once again, we find nothing stated in the instructions that would alter this command if the man who violated the maiden was already married. It was lawful for a man to have more than one wife. Therefore the man who was married, and who forced a virgin and was discovered, would of necessity have to receive a second wife.

There are likewise, other commands that I have not yet named which are found in the Law that Yahweh delivered to Moses. These laws set guidelines for the man who has more than one wife. Following is the unusual case of a man who takes a slave girl to be his wife.

Exodus 21:7-10

And if a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do. If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her. And if he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

There is a great deal of evidence in the Scriptures to allow those interested to test this matter. The conclusion is certain: Yahweh permitted a man to have more than one wife. Yahweh never condemned a man as an adulterer, or even as a transgressor, if he had more than one wife. As we have seen, Yahweh blessed many men who had a plurality of wives, and has given these men a name, that they are righteous. These men include Abraham, Jacob (Israel), and David. It is very possible that even Moses had more than one living wife.

Exodus 2:16-21

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "Why have you come back so soon today?" So they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock." And he said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." And Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses.

Here we read of Moses marrying Zipporah, who was the daughter of the priest of Midian. Zipporah was a Midianite, and therefore a descendant of Abraham.

Genesis 25:1-2

Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and **Midian**...

Moses' first wife was acceptable to his family, for she was a descendant of Abraham, and a Shemite (Semite), a descendant of Noah's son Shem. Later, Moses took a wife who was a Cushite.

Numbers 12:1

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman)...

The land of Cush, is synonymous with Ethiopia. The people there are black skinned, and they are descendants of Noah's son Ham.

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Genesis 10:6

And the sons of Ham were **Cush** and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.

It was due to Moses having married a descendant of Ham, whom Noah cursed, that Miriam and Aaron criticized him. God judged Miriam for her disrespect toward Moses, striking her with leprosy.

What I wish to point out is that Moses had two wives, and it is possible, but not absolutely certain, that he had two wives who were both living, for nothing is mentioned of Zipporah having died. It is those who view polygamy as sin who would argue that Zipporah must certainly have died prior to Moses marrying the Cushite. We are not told that Zipporah had died. Moses delivered many laws to the people allowing for men to have more than one wife, so it must be considered that even Moses may have practiced plural marriage.

I would proceed on to look at a few Scriptures that have been used to condemn the practice of a man having more than one wife. They all come from the words of Christ, and are needful to consider.

Matthew 19:9

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Mark 10:11-12

And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

Luke 16:18-19

"Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."

What is obvious from each of these verses is that divorce is the central matter being discussed. Christ is not addressing the practice of polygamy. If He had been, He would have said, "Every man who takes to himself more than one wife commits adultery."

Let us consider Christ's words in light of a very similar statement that He made. It includes much of the same phrasing and context as the three verses cited, while adding additional insight.

Matthew 5:31-32

"And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Here is the heart of the matter. The man who divorces his wife for any cause other than unchastity, or fornication (Greek 'porneia'), is a transgressor in the eyes of God. The man's transgression is two-fold. He makes his wife commit adultery, and he allows other men to commit adultery with her.

The man who divorces his wife for any cause other than unchastity... is a transgressor.

Mark 10:11-12

And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another (woman) **commits adultery against her**; and if she herself divorces

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her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

What is intended by the words, "commits adultery against her"? This is not the same as the common definition of a man committing adultery,

Christ is not presenting a new definition of adultery for the man...

for as we have seen, this is always defined as a man taking another man's wife to himself. Does not the man who divorces his wife "commit adultery

against her" by placing her in a situation where she must commit adultery to survive? Indeed, he does, and this was clearly what Christ was expressing in Matthew 5:31-32.

We see therefore, that Christ is not presenting a new definition of adultery for the man, nor is He now condemning the man who has more than one wife. What He is speaking of is the transgression of the man who divorces his wife for a reason other than 'porneia.'

Matthew chapter 19, and Mark chapter 10, are describing the same encounter between Christ and the Pharisees, who had come to try to entrap Yahshua in His words.

Matthew 19:3

And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?"

Mark 10:2

The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him.

In each instance the question Christ is answering is whether a man may divorce his wife for any

cause. The question was not whether a man may have more than one wife. Christ answers the Pharisees by saying that a man is only allowed to divorce his wife for the cause of fornication. If a man puts a wife away for any other reason, he commits adultery against her by causing her to enter into union with another man. This results in the woman, and the man who takes her for his wife, committing adultery.

Comparing Scripture to Scripture we are able to arrive at the correct meaning of the words of Christ. Yahshua is not describing some new transgression that occurs when a man has more than one wife, for the Law did not declare polygamy to be transgression. Christ is instead, revealing the Father's heart concerning a man putting away his wife with a writing of divorce. These are separate matters.

Let me conclude this matter of a Scriptural understanding of lawful polygamy by stating those points we have observed in the Scriptures.

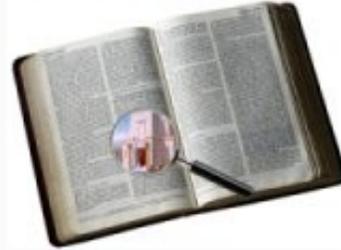
- Polygamy has been practiced among mankind from the opening chapters of the Bible.
- Many righteous men had more than one living wife, among them were Abraham, Jacob and David.
- Yahweh blessed men through the offspring of their latter wives, not just their first wife.
- The Law that Yahweh delivered to Moses regulated polygamy, but did not forbid it.
- Yahweh described Himself as having more than one wife.
- Yahweh said He gave David his wives.

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- Yahweh established certain Laws, such as that of the kinsman redeemer, that at times required a man to have more than one wife.
- Adultery for a man is defined as sexual intercourse with another man's wife.
- Christ said a man would be causing his wife to commit adultery if he divorced her for any reason other than fornication.

Adultery for a man is defined as sexual intercourse with another man's wife.

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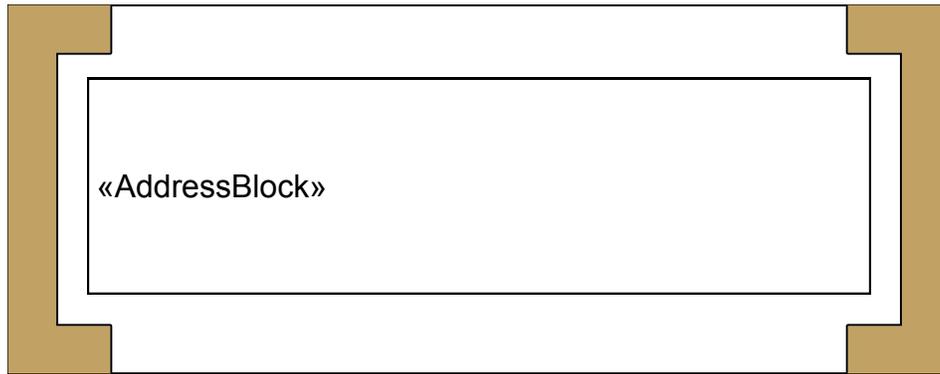
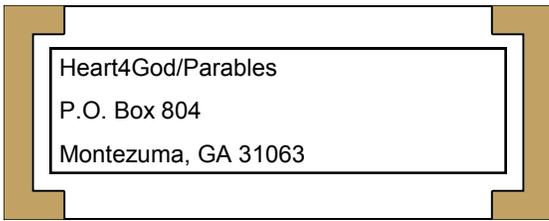
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PARABLES PRECEPT— What’s in a Name?



The name of the first woman is as meaningful as the name of the first man. We are given a clue to what her name means in the first verse of the Bible in which she is named.

Genesis 3:20

Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.

In Hebrew this name would be

pronounced as Chavah (Khavah). The word Chavah in Hebrew means “life-giver.”

There are some today who teach that there were other men present on the Earth in the days of Adam and Eve. Some suggest that other races of men came from these ancestors who were coexistent with Adam and Eve.

The Scriptures reveal that this could not be so. We are told that Eve was the mother of ALL living. Some ask, “Then where did Cain and Seth, the sons of Adam and Ever, get their wives?” Many overlook one small verse in chapter 5 of Genesis that explains this.

Genesis 5:4

Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, **and he had other sons and daughters.**

It was not forbidden in those days to marry a close relative, for that was all there was. Even centuries after the flood of Noah we read that Abraham married his sister Sarah. They had the same father, but different mothers.

Eve’s name is truly descriptive of the key role she holds in the history of mankind. Eve is the mother of all the living.