

THE MARRIAGE COVENANT



**Understanding God's heart concerning
sexual purity, the marital union,
sex and divorce.**

Joseph Herrin

The Marriage Covenant

by Joseph Herrin

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Foreword

A word of explanation is necessary at the start of this book. In this work you will find this writer using names in reference to God the Father and God the Son that are more faithful to their Hebrew original than the names and titles generally in use by the church today. The name Yah, or Yahweh, will be found in reference to God the Father, and the name Yahshua will be utilized when speaking of the Son.

This usage is not intended to be divisive, nor does it serve as a renunciation of the usage of titles such as Lord or God. Neither is it a condemnation of those who choose to call the Son of God Jesus. My intent as a teacher of the Bible is simply to illumine and instruct. There is great meaning in the Hebrew names of the Father and the Son, and these names are directly related to one another, as well as bearing many significant relationships to other historic figures from the Bible, some of whom serves as types and shadows of the Son of God.

For example, Joshua, the Israelite leader who led the people of God across the Jordan and into battle to take possession of the land of Canaan bears the same name as the Messiah. They both were called Yahshua. The Son of God also began His ministry at the Jordan River as He was baptized by John. Both men labored to establish a kingdom dedicated to Yahweh, the first external and natural, the latter internal and spiritual.

Yah is the name used in reference to the Father on forty-nine separate occasions in the Old Testament. Most Christians have utilized this name of God without knowing that they were doing so. Whenever the word hallelujah is uttered, the speaker is literally exclaiming "Praise Yah," for this is the meaning of the Hebrew word from which it is derived. The longer name Yahweh is found an additional 6,828 times.

The name of the Son is likewise significant, for Yahshua is understood to mean "Yah's Salvation." The Gospel writer indicates that this is the meaning of the name given to the Savior at His birth.

Matthew 1:21

"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yahshua, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

It has been the practice of this writer for many years to use these names, which more clearly represent their Hebrew originals. It is my hope that their employment in this book might aid the reader by bringing forth light on relationships that are obscured, as well as promoting an increased intimacy with God the Father by calling Him by His memorial name, instead of a title which men have substituted.



INTRODUCTION

The outward life of Christians is a testimony to their inner spiritual life. Those who are righteous will manifest this righteousness in their life as it is observed before the world. Those who are unrighteous will likewise provide an outward testimony of their spiritual condition.

As one observes the church at large today, it is evident that the spiritual life of the body of Christ is at a very low state. Churches are increasingly enticing people into their embrace with entertainment, sports, music, feasting, and dynamic speakers. Church calendars would put to shame many a civic organization as they offer everything from ocean cruises to pilates work-out groups. Churches have leagues for golf, bowling, baseball, and basketball. They offer trips to the mall and outlet shops, as well as in-house banquets and concerts.

The message of the ministers is one of “Be fulfilled; Live your best life now; Don’t worry, be happy!” The message of self-denial, of the disciple’s cross, of being a bond-servant of Christ, has been replaced with a message of personal fulfillment and pleasure. The apostle Paul prophesied that this would be the condition of the church in the last days before the return of Christ.

II Timothy 3:1-5

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **treacherous**, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.

II Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

This tragic condition of apostasy will appear on the earth, and be observed among the church, before the return of Christ.

II Thessalonians 2:3

Let no one in any way deceive you, for [the appearing of Christ] will not come unless the apostasy comes first..

What Paul described in II Timothy is this condition of apostasy. The word apostasy means “a divorcement from the truth.” Those who have fallen from truth have done so because they love their own lives. They want to fulfill their own soul’s desires, rather than to love God above all other things. The result is that they turn away from sound doctrine. Indeed, they will not even endure it. Instead, they have heaped to themselves teachers to proclaim the things their souls crave. They have embraced myths and fables.

This great fall of Christendom has certainly impacted the doctrines surrounding the sanctity and holiness of the marriage covenant. You will have noted earlier that I highlighted the word “treacherous” in Paul’s words to Timothy. This English word appears elsewhere in Scripture.

Malachi 2:14-16

Yahweh has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt **treacherously**, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal **treacherously** against the wife of your youth. “For I hate divorce,” says Yahweh, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says Yahweh of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal **treacherously**.”

You will not find anyone in the churches today who will admit that Paul’s words concerning the state of the church applies to them. No one will say, “Yes, I love pleasure more than God. Yes, I am a lover of money, arrogant, and unholy.” Yet these same people have shopped around until they have found ministers who will proclaim the things they want to hear. Prosperity preachers are abundant in this hour. Why? Because men love money, and pleasure, and material possessions.

Neither will a man confess today, “Yes, Paul has described me perfectly when he said the church in the last days will be filled with ‘treacherous’ men.” Yet this very word describes one who breaks a covenant. To break faith is an act of treason. To divorce the wife of one’s youth is a treacherous act, and it happens with great regularity among Christians today.

Malachi stands as the oracle of God when he writes, “‘I hate divorce,’ says Yahweh God, ‘and he who covers his garment with wrong.’”

In Matthew 22:1-14 Christ speaks a parable of His return and the marriage supper of the Lamb. He speaks of a great king that is giving a marriage supper for his son. He describes guests who have been gathered together from throughout the earth. When the King came in to look over his dinner guests, he found one without a proper wedding garment. The garment that all must be arrayed with is the garment of righteousness. They must clothe themselves with righteousness and “put on Christ.”

Ephesians 4:24

Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Romans 13:14

Put on the Lord Yahshua the Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Many will appear at the marriage supper of the Lamb without having a proper wedding garment. These will be cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:13). Many are called, but few are chosen.

People of God, let no man deceive you. The one who practices righteousness is

righteous. If you have been seeking the desires of your own soul, and have found comfort in hearing ministers proclaim the things you wanted to hear, you stand in a place of great peril today. The Son of God is very soon to return, and He will recompense every man and woman according to that which they have done.

Great error has gone forth concerning the doctrines of marriage and divorce. Every Christian who fears God should study this topic with great diligence. They must rightly divide the word of God, not searching for something to support the conclusions they desire to arrive at. This life on earth is very fleeting. The pleasure of the moment will soon give way to the judgments of the ages to come. Many will experience weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth as they are cast out from the presence of the Lamb and are denied entry to the marriage supper.

The Spirit of Christ has been directing me to a study of a number of foundational subjects that are critical in understanding the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. These topics include understanding covenants. The Hebrew word for covenant literally means “a cut where blood flows.” A blood covenant is enacted whenever a man goes into his virgin bride. He literally enters between the divided pieces of flesh, as God did when He enacted His covenant with Abraham. There is much that is profound in this teaching, and those who understand it will never be able to treat virginity as a common thing. Those who love God and understand covenant will prize virginity, and desire to remain pure until they establish a life-long covenant with the one with whom God has chosen for them to become “one flesh.”

Another related subject is that spoken of in the words, “the life is in the blood.” The word rendered as *life* is the Hebrew word *nephesh* and the Greek word *psuche*. Both are words that are equally rendered as *soul*. Yahweh has declared that the **soul** of all living things is in the blood.

Other than through the process of our conception and birth, there is no other time ordained of God that mankind passes blood from one person to another than in the act of sexual intercourse. God has given mankind strict prohibitions against partaking of blood, or eating blood. Only in the intimacy between husband and wife is blood transferred from one to another. In this way the soul of the man and the woman become mingled. There are tremendous and terrible ramifications when mankind is promiscuous. As the apostle Paul declared:

I Corinthians 6:18-19

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

Consider what Paul is saying here. The body is intended to be a temple where the soul of man communes with the Spirit of God. There are to be no other entities encroaching upon this holy sanctuary. When a man marries a woman they become one flesh. This is a union set apart as holy by God. The man and his wife are considered as ONE, and the temple of the body remains pure.

When a man (or woman) has sexual relations with others that are not their spouse, they sin against their own body. They are treating the temple of God as an unholy thing. They are allowing access of foreign souls into their bodies, thereby defiling the temple of

God.

Every disease that resides in another person's blood is transmitted through sexual intimacy to their sexual partners. This is how HIV, herpes, and other sexually transmitted diseases that are blood-borne gain access into the body of another. This transfer provides evidence that there is a blood transfer. Diseases are in the blood, and so is the soul (nephesh). The souls of other people gain entrance into our own body through the act of sexual intercourse.

For those who have not studied this matter, it is no doubt a mystery. Yet it has great bearing upon the marriage covenant and reveals the great need to remain sexually pure.

A further related subject is that of the Hebrew wedding customs as revealed in Scriptures. The betrothal period, the absence of the bridegroom for a period of time, his sudden and unannounced return, and his examination of his bride on the wedding night to determine whether she has kept herself pure and chaste, all reveal precious truths about our relationship to Christ as well as Yahweh's intended relationship between a husband and wife.

Some will immediately recognize that they have already failed in these areas. Questions will arise concerning what must be done to make things right before God and man. By the grace of God, these things, and others will be examined in this series of teachings.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.



Foundation Stone One - Covenant

As I set forth to present this teaching on the sanctity of the marriage covenant, I have chosen to approach the task by laying a foundation before addressing more specific issues. The first foundation stone to be laid is that of Covenant.

Yahweh is a covenant-keeping God. Moses wrote:

Deuteronomy 7:9

Know therefore that Yahweh your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

King David declared the following:

I Kings 8:23

And he said, "O Yahweh, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, who is keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart."

The nature of Yahweh is ***faithfulness***. As the apostle Paul also declared:

II Timothy 2:13

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

When Yahweh says something, the matter is certain.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent.

In saying that God will not repent, Moses is declaring that Yahweh will not renege on a promise. Whenever a man 'renegotiates' a contract, he is renegeing on a deal. Such a man has lied. He has broken faith. His own personal interests have led him to defraud and act treacherously toward another person to whom he has given his word.

In sports we see this happen all the time. Whenever a professional athlete has a good season, it is almost automatic that he will seek to renegotiate his contract. Although he has made a legally binding promise for services, the athlete will either directly, or through an agent, seek to alter the terms of the contract in his/her favor.

The history of America's broken treaties with the native Indian nations is one of deplorable treachery. Whenever it seemed desirable in the light of self-interest to breach a treaty, it was simply set aside, and a new treaty drawn up, which would also later be broken.

When I was in my early twenties, and just entering into marriage, I was self-employed, having started a company called Handyman Painting and Home Repair. I was a very conscientious worker, seeking to perform skillful work at a fair price. I often had a couple other men working with me, and I had to estimate time and labor on every job I took. Very often I bid low on a job as I sought to provide a fair and reasonable price to those for whom

I was working.

On many jobs I found I had bid too low. After paying for materials, labor, and other expenses, I at times did not make any money. The thought suggested itself in my mind at times to seek to renegotiate with the person who had hired me, but I never entertained the thought. I remembered the following words of the Psalmist, as he answered the question “Who will dwell in Your Tabernacle and dwell on Your holy hill?” The answer is supplied, “He who swears to his own hurt and does not change” (Psalms 15:4).

I knew it was better for me to receive financial injury myself, than to fail to honor my word. The unfaithfulness that is commonplace to man is foreign to the nature of Yahweh. Yahweh does not merely sign a contract with man when He gives His word on a matter. He seals it with an everlasting covenant that cannot be broken. What God has declared, He will perform.

Ezekiel 17:24

“I am Yahweh; I have spoken, and I will perform it.”

From mankind’s inception, God determined to fashion a creature in His own image, after His own likeness. Mankind was designed to be a perfect reflection of the nature and character of Elohim. Satan has succeeded in marring the image of man, and bringing forth his own perverse image in the heart of mankind. When Adam fell, we were all in Adam, for we were his seed. Consequently we also fell and became subject to the beast nature.

This lowly, corrupt beast nature is revealed in the curse placed upon the serpent. “On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat.” There is a great parable in these words. “On your belly” signifies that the beast nature is driven by its appetites. It is always selfish, seeking to satisfy the desires of the flesh. Eating dust is a symbol of craving fleshly things, for the flesh of man was formed of the dust of the earth. Paul uses this same imagery to describe Christians who crave evil things.

Philippians 3:18-19

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, ***whose god is their belly...***

When Adam submitted himself in obedience to the beast, he took on the beast nature. As the apostle Paul declares, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey?” (Romans 6:16). Mankind fell into slavery to a lower, bestial nature when Adam transgressed in the Garden of Eden. The character of God was no longer present in man. Man became “formless and void” in a perfect parallel to the earth from which his body was fashioned. Man was formless in that He lacked the image of God. He was void in that he was devoid of the Spirit, for which he had been created to be a temple.

Due to sin, whenever God wanted to demonstrate to mankind that a promise was given that could not be broken, He presented it in the form of a covenant. Mankind was prone to lying, deception, selfishness, and unfaithfulness. Therefore, Yahweh instituted the covenant that man might have a way of binding himself, and being held in perfect accountability, to an agreement with another party. The only way out of this type of compact was through death.

With God, such covenants are not necessary, for His nature is faithfulness. Yet fallen man is unfaithful. The covenant was given to testify with great certainty that when man gave his word it could never be altered, renegotiated, or broken. The consequences of breaking covenant was death.

There were certain symbols and elements that were used to establish a covenant. Their presence holds great meaning. We read of one such covenant that God made with His friend, Abraham. The context of the passage is a discussion between Yahweh and Abraham in which Abraham asks for an heir. Yahweh promises Abraham that he will have a son from his own loins, and that he will become a great nation and possess the land in which Abraham was sojourning.

Genesis 15:8-18

And [Abraham] said, "O Yahweh God, how may I know that I shall possess it?" So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him... And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day Yahweh made a **covenant** with Abram.



God's Covenant with Abraham

It is important here to note that Yahweh chose specific items to denote the covenant that was made. These same elements appear in other covenants that Yahweh has made. These symbols are also found throughout God's creation wherever a covenant is present. At times these symbols will be hidden from our eyes, but they are present nevertheless. As we will see, the elements of the blood covenant are present whenever a man goes into his virgin bride for the first time.

What are the identifiable elements in the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham? There is flesh, represented in the beasts. There is a division of the flesh, even as the animals were cut into two halves. There is blood, which is always the consequence of the flesh being cut. And there is a passing between the pieces of flesh in the path of blood.

Henry Stanley, who spoke the famous words, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume," wrote of the prominence of the blood covenant rite in his travels through Africa. One way in which the blood covenant was practiced in Africa is observed in the illustration above. Animals were cut in two and the halves laid opposite one another. The blood would run down between the pieces. The two men who were making covenant would then each walk barefoot through the blood between the pieces.

It was understood by the covenanting parties that "life is in the blood." By walking in the blood of these animals they were effectually pledging their lives to one another. In addition, there were often terrible imprecations spoken, indicating what would happen if the covenant was not upheld. We witness this terrible aspect of the covenant in Yahweh's compact with Abraham. Although no threatening words were uttered by God, we read of Abraham's sense of great terror. "Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him..."

A covenant was the most solemn agreement that could be made. It was literally a death pledge. Traditional marriage vows end with the words, "until death do us part." This is because a marriage is more than a contract, or a partnership. A marriage is more than a social arrangement of mutual benefit. From the very beginning, Yahweh ordained the union of a man and woman to be a covenant unto death.

It will be demonstrated conclusively in this series of teachings that the marriage union is most certainly a blood covenant. One of the major subjects of covenants found throughout Scriptures is the promise of sons, or of godly offspring. This was the context of Yahweh's covenant with Abraham. Abraham had remained without a son for many years as his wife Sarah was barren. Abraham desired greatly to see fruit come forth from his loins, and to be a father. Yahweh promised Abraham that he would indeed be the father of many nations, and that one nation in particular would be set aside as holy unto God.

This promised son, and the nation to arise from him, was to be the fruit of the union of Abraham and his wife Sarah. All the other nations that arose from Abraham's loins came either through Sarah's Egyptian servant Hagar, or through Abraham's second wife Keturah, whom he married after Sarah had died.

Yahweh has created man in his image and likeness. One of Yahweh's great desires is to have sons in His own image, and He has placed this desire in the heart of man. What Yahweh had actually promised Abraham was that he would father sons who would be holy unto Yahweh.

When two men enter into a blood covenant of friendship, they literally are pledging themselves in every area of their lives to one another. Yahweh literally pledged to Abraham that He would undertake for him to raise up a godly seed. Abraham had no power to accomplish this by any power of his own. Therefore Yahweh walked between the pieces

alone. He promised to accomplish all, for man cannot in his own strength raise up a seed that will be "holy unto Yahweh."

I have been greatly blessed in my study on the Blood Covenant to come across a book written in 1885 by H. Clay Trumbull D.D.. The book is titled *Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite, and its Bearing on Scripture*. It is filled with historical examples of the blood covenant through the ages to the present time. Trumbull gives one particular mention of the blood covenant from the Egyptian religions that pre-dated Abraham. He writes of a quotation found in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

The Ritual goes on to say: "The blood is that which proceeds from the member of the Sun, after he goes along cutting himself"; the covenant blood which unites the soul and the god is drawn from the flesh of Ra, when he has cut himself in the rite of that covenant. By this covenant-cutting, the deceased becomes one with the covenanting gods. Again, the departed soul, speaking as Osiris, - or as the Osirian, which every mummy represents, says: "I am the soul in his two halves." Once more there follows the explanation: "The soul in his two halves is the soul of the Sun [of Ra], and the soul of Osiris [of the deceased]." Here is substantially the proverb of friendship cited by Aristotle, "One soul in two bodies," at least two thousand years before the days of the Greek philosopher.

As this Egyptian writing pre-dates Abraham, and is from the very region in which he was living, I believe it is helpful in discerning some of the symbols of the covenant ritual. I have never heard the elements of the covenant taught upon with any authority, and I have depended upon the Spirit to direct me in making investigation of this very profound matter.

I had wondered at the meaning of the animals being split in twain, and laid opposite one another with the blood flowing between them. My attention was caught by the words of the ancient Egyptians, "**I am the soul in two halves.**" The two halves thus mentioned were the Egyptian god, and the deceased man.

Consider that just prior to Yahweh appearing between the pieces as a smoking oven and a flaming torch, Abraham fell into "a deep sleep." Sleep is often used as a synonym for death in Scriptures. Thus we have an image of Abraham in death, and God walking between the pieces enacting the covenant. It was appropriate for Abraham to be symbolically "dead," for he had nothing to contribute to the covenant. He could not promise to perform anything. God would undertake both Abraham's part, and His own.

We read of a smoking oven and a flaming torch passing between the pieces, and these things most assuredly symbolized God, for He was the One enacting the covenant. Yahweh had to pass between the pieces down the bloody path. The smoking oven, if I have not missed my guess, represented Yahweh, for He is described elsewhere as "a consuming fire." The flaming torch, would then have likely represented Yahshua. He is the light of the world, and He did truly walk the path of blood as He carried His cross to Golgotha's hill.

Yahweh was in effect promising that Abraham would have a godly seed, and a holy nation would arise from this seed. Abraham could not perform his own part in this matter, so Yahweh undertook for him. Yahweh would have His own Son to be born of the family of Abraham, and His Son would fulfill the covenant. Christ would insure that a Godly seed, and a holy nation, would arise in the earth.

Later on, we find Yahweh once again speaking to Abraham of this covenant, and the promise of a Godly heritage. Yahweh required Abraham, and his offspring to receive a sign

of the covenant. Since the covenant was focused upon a godly seed, it is appropriate that the sign of the covenant should be made in the procreative organ of the man. Yahweh required that Abraham and his sons be circumcised.

The timing of this was very important. Abraham's first son Ishmael had already been born. He was thirteen years old, but he was not the promised seed from which a holy nation would come. When Abraham had relations with Hagar, he was not yet circumcised.

Genesis 17:24-26

Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

The circumcision of the male sexual organ is literally a cutting away, and removal, of the flesh. It represented that man's fleshly strength would not be utilized to fulfill the promise of a godly heritage. "The flesh profits nothing." The flesh of man could not produce righteous and holy seed. God would bring forth this seed, and He would insure that Abraham would have the offspring his heart desired, an offspring that could forever stand in the presence of a holy God.

It was immediately after Abraham was circumcised that Yahweh again appeared to him and informed him that the next year when God visited him, he would have a son through Sarah. Thus, Isaac was born AFTER the covenant of circumcision was made between Abraham and God.

Yahweh's covenant with Abraham was not one of Law, for the Law would not be given for another 430 years (Galatians 3:17). It was a covenant of promise. Yahweh was saying He would accomplish what had been promised, and Abraham's part was to believe God.

Galatians 3:17-18

What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

This covenant of circumcision involved some of the same symbols as the earlier covenant. There was flesh that was cut, and there was blood. There was also symbolized the impotence of man to accomplish the purposes of God. The removal of the foreskin of the male sex organ was a testimony that man's flesh must be removed out of the way in order for God to accomplish His promise. Man could not contribute anything from his flesh. His part was to look to Yahweh in faith.

Abraham had sought to accomplish the promise of God, and obtain a hope of a godly heritage, by having relations with his wife's handmaiden Hagar. Yahweh rejected this "fruit" for the same reason that He had rejected Cain's offering. It was the fruit of man's own fleshly efforts. It was not an offering of faith. Man must be brought to realize his impotence to produce anything from his own fleshly strength that will merit God's regard.

Returning once again to the early covenant where the animals were cut in two and the blood flowed between them, the Scriptures declare that "the soul (nephesh) is in the blood." What did these severed pieces of flesh and the blood signify but "the soul in two halves."

There was the blood, containing the soul of the creature, and there were the two halves. Yahweh was symbolically testifying that the soul of Abraham and the soul of God would become as one. They would stand together to see the promise completed. Yahweh would accomplish it, and Abraham would believe.

All blood covenants have this in common; they represent the union of two souls into one.

In the introduction to this series, I mentioned that the physical consummation of the marriage union contains all the elements of a blood covenant. Even as the male sex organ is sanctified as the chosen instrument of God's covenant with man, so the female sex organ is chosen as the covenant organ between man and woman. Even as the flesh of man is torn, resulting in a flow of blood, so the virgin hymen is torn as the woman has intercourse for the first time with her husband, resulting in bleeding.

What is the object of the covenant thus enacted between the man and the woman? It is to produce offspring in the image of the man, even as Yahweh's covenant was to produce offspring in the image of God. Both actions are the same, for man has been created in the image and likeness of God. Male and female He created them.

Let us refer back to the words of the prophet Malachi to discern the intent of the marriage union.

Malachi 2:14-15

Yahweh has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. ***And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring?***

The prophet is saying that the purpose of the marriage union is to seek a godly offspring. Yet in the pursuit of a godly offspring, the men of Israel were acting treacherously against their covenant wives. Their actions were ungodly. How then could they expect that the fruit of their ungodliness would result in godly offspring. The prophet declares flatly, "Not one who has done so has a remnant of the Spirit." Is this not an indictment against many in the church today who are acting with treachery toward their covenant wives?

We see then, that the focus of these blood covenants is the production of godly offspring. Yahweh desires sons in His image and likeness. Similarly, those who are of the faith and heart of Abraham seek for the same. Yahweh enters into covenant with man to undertake for him, and man enters into a covenant with woman to undertake for her.

Examine the Scriptures and you will see that those women whom God esteemed as godly all sought desperately to raise up offspring. Many accounts of barren women in great travail are brought before our eyes in the Scriptures. Eve was grieved when Cain slew righteous Abel. She therefore rejoiced when Yahweh gave her another son, Seth, who would carry on a righteous lineage.

Sarah was barren until her old age, and rejoiced greatly when Yahweh opened her womb. Her delight leaps forth from the pages of Scripture.

Genesis 21:6-7

And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with

me." And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Rachel, the favorite wife of Jacob remained barren while her sister bore many children. She cried out in her desperate desire for children. Her complaint even arose before her husband.

Genesis 30:1-2

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

See Rachel's desperate desire to raise up godly offspring. She said, "Give me children, or else I die!" What a reproach this is to Christian women today who have used contraceptives and birth control, who have elected to have surgery, in order that they might have the pleasure of sexual intercourse without raising up children. The ungodly influence of the world has affected the thoughts of the people of God. They say "Let me have one or two children, and that is enough." They think of the expense and the responsibility of a larger family, and wanting to maintain their freedoms and a high standard of living, they cast away the most precious gift Yahweh has given to mankind, the ability to raise up a godly offspring. Many even kill the baby while it is developing in the womb, an act of the most profound horror and selfishness.

Jacob undertook for his wife Rachel to provide the children she desired, but her womb remained barren. Finally, God heard her plea of desperation and opened her womb. She gave birth to Joseph, and later to Benjamin. It is perhaps no coincidence that Jacob's godliest son arose from the most desperate cry for children.

Later we read of Hannah, who was also barren. She pled with God for a son in such agony of spirit that when the High Priest Eli observed her, he thought she was drunk.

I Samuel 1:10-16

And [Hannah], greatly distressed, prayed to Yahweh and wept bitterly. And she made a vow and said, "O Yahweh of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thy maidservant and remember me, and not forget Thy maidservant, but wilt give Thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head." Now it came about, as she continued praying before Yahweh, that Eli was watching her mouth. As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. Then Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you." But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before Yahweh. Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman; for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation."

People of God, can you see that this is the purpose of the marriage union of the man and woman? From the beginning of creation, when God created them male and female, He spoke to them the command to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." If we bear the

image of God, we will also desire to raise up a godly heritage to His name.

Not all are married, and not all are able to have children, but Yahweh will allow them to have many sons and daughters as they give themselves to disciple others. They will be given spiritual children in an everlasting kingdom. Yet, whenever we consider the purpose of the marriage union, this idea of raising up godly offspring should not be far from our thoughts. It is a righteous aspiration, one that arises from God's own heart.

If there is one foundational motive in Yahweh's heart as pertains to man, it is to have sons in His image and likeness. In pursuit of this He has bound Himself with a covenant of blood, a promise that cannot be broken, as demonstrated to His friend Abraham. All about this matter is holy and sacred. All has been spoken from the lips of God with perfect faithfulness. He has said it. He will perform it.

As we consider the marriage union of the man and woman, we are to understand that they become partakers with Yahweh in this same holy and sacred pursuit. The union of the man and woman is sacred and holy. They are brought together in a lifelong, inviolable covenant, to accomplish in their bodies the will and command of the Father.

Giving birth is but the beginning. All the energy and focus of the husband and wife should be turned toward training up a godly generation. When their children are themselves adults and married, the parents' task is not over. One brother in Christ recently lamented to me, "It is no wonder that the children are perishing and families are overcome with evil. The older generation who should be giving themselves sacrificially as prayer warriors and seeking to promote a continued godly heritage in their children and grandchildren; these ones are spending their time on the golf courses, at the clubs, watching endless hours of television, and living at ease. It is no wonder that this generation is falling into apostasy."

From the oldest to the youngest, Christians have departed from the will of God. We must return and rebuild the ancient ruins. We must re-establish the age-old foundations. We must repair the breaches and restore the streets in which to dwell (Isaiah 58:12).

Returning to an understanding of covenant, and the purpose of God in creating man and woman is a step in this direction. If we truly have set our hearts to raise up a godly offspring, will we seek to accomplish this high purpose through actions of unfaithfulness, treachery, and selfishness? Let us not be deceived. He who practices righteousness is righteous. May Yahweh give His people great grace, allowing them to repent and return to the narrow way.



Foundation Stone Two - The Body as a Temple

Please note: *Some of the following is necessarily sexually explicit, but it is with a very good purpose. Those who understand the correlation between a woman's body and the Tabernacle of God, will be enabled to discern that both are to be viewed as holy in the eyes of man. The debasing of the woman's body into a symbol of lust is a tragic result of the activity of Satan and the fruit of sin. God would have us to restore a sense of holiness to the realm of sexuality.*

A second foundation to be laid in order to answer many of the questions pertaining to marriage, divorce, and remarriage, is that of observing how the Father has created the physical human body after the pattern found in the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon.

That God has designed the human body and the Tabernacle and Temple as types and anti-types of one another is plainly stated in Scriptures.

I Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God...

II Corinthians 6:16

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Yahshua Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

I Peter 2:5

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house...

These Scriptures are but a sampling of the many that bring forth the concept of mankind having been designed to be a sanctuary, a tabernacle, and a holy dwelling place for the Spirit of God. We should therefore expect that what Yahweh has shown forth in the design of the Tabernacle and Temple will find correspondence with the physical bodies of men and women.

One evident parallel is that both the Tabernacle and Temple contained three distinct and clearly defined sections. There was the Outer Court, the Inner Court or Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place. These three sections find perfect correspondence to man as he is also a tri-part being consisting of body, soul and spirit.

I Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Yahshua Christ.

It is to be noted that the Tabernacle of Moses, which was the original sanctuary of Israel, and in some ways a better pattern of man (for it was mobile, rather than fixed in one place), was covered in skins. This is a feature that was lacking in the Temple of Solomon.

Exodus 36:19

And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins* dyed red, and a covering of porpoise skins above.

* (some translations say "badger's skins")

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness was a structure of poles covered with skins in the same way the human body is a structure of bones covered with skin. Inside and outside the Tabernacle were various vessels and implements that find correspondence with the organs of man. There was the Bronze Laver, or Bronze Sea, located outside for the purpose of cleansing. There was the altar for sacrifices, also in the Outer Court. In the Holy Place was the Table of Showbread and the Golden Candlestick, the latter of which was at times moved into the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, and there was a curtain to divide between each of the sections. The curtain concealing the entrance to the Holy of Holies was described in this way.

Exodus 26:31-33

"And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen... and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies."

It is particularly upon this point that I would like to focus, as much can be gleaned concerning the marriage covenant, virginity, and sexual fidelity as the type of the veil of the Tabernacle and the anti-type of the virgin hymen are observed together.

The anatomical description given to the female hymen from days of antiquity is "the veil of the temple." The Greeks related this description of the female hymen to the rites of the goddess Aphrodite, whose temple contained a veil like curtain to mark the entrance to the inner sanctum. Aphrodite was considered the goddess of love and sexual intimacy. The veil in front of the inner sanctum of Aphrodite's temple was called "the hymen." The Greek word *hymen* literally means "veil," though it can be more scientifically rendered as "membrane," and often is.

The veil is an emblem well known to people throughout the world in association with brides, particularly virgin brides, though many do not know the origin of the association. To the Greeks, the word Hymen (veil) was closely linked to marriage and weddings. Aside from the association found in the temple of Aphrodite, the Greeks also recognized Hymen as the name of one of their gods.

Hymen, also rendered as Hymenaeus, or Hymenaios, was depicted as a youthful and beautiful young man who carried a torch and a veil. Various tales were related to him, such

as one that described him rescuing a group of young maidens from a band of pirates. Having delivered them from being ravished by these evil men, the maidens all honored Hymen on their wedding days, and their Wedding songs became known as Hymeneal songs, from which we get our present day term “hymnal.” That the church has continued the use of the term hymnal is not altogether inappropriate, for the church has been espoused to Christ as a pure virgin (II Corinthians 11:2), and she does stand in anticipation of her marriage union with Christ.

The names of the gods were often given to individuals, a practice that continues to this day, though often in ignorance. In Scriptures we find saints who bore the names of the Greek gods Apollos and Hermes. There is even one named who bore the name of the god Hymen.

I Timothy 1:20

Among these are **Hymenaeus** and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

I am demonstrating the relationship between the word *hymen* and the *veil* to encourage understanding of the points which will follow. Although the Greeks, and many other cultures, were quite vain in their worship of strange gods and goddesses, there were elements of truth mixed in with their myths and fables. The Greeks, as did other cultures before them, recognized that the female hymen, that thin veil of flesh, a living membrane that covers the entrance to the vagina, served as a type and shadow of **the veil of the temple**. The human body was designed to be the temple, or tabernacle, of God, and no matter how much Satan and fallen mankind has corrupted this knowledge, the basic fact remains as ordained by the One true God, Yahweh.

It is this association of the hymen being the veil of the human temple that has given rise to the prominence of veils as part of a virgin bride’s dress. The veil worn by a bride is a testimony of her virginity. Even as a virgin’s wedding gown is typically white, to denote purity, the wedding veil provides testimony to the bride’s chastity. During the wedding ceremony the bridegroom removes the bridal veil, as testimony that his bride has remained pure and that he is given the honor of being the first to enter into sexual union with her.

In the Old Testament, the intact hymen provided evidence of a woman’s virginity. When a virgin has sexual intercourse for the first time, the hymen is torn, and bleeding results. On her wedding night, the bride would carry a piece of cloth with her to catch the blood that flowed when her hymen was thus torn. The cloth would then be given to the woman’s father to be kept as proof that she was a virgin when she wed.

Deuteronomy 22:13-21

"If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then turns against her, and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, 'I took this woman, but when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,' then the girl's father and her mother shall take and bring out the evidence of the girl's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. And the girl's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man for a wife, but he turned against her; and behold, he has charged her with shameful deeds, saying, "I did not find your daughter a virgin." But this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. So the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him, and

they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give it to the girl's father, because he publicly defamed a virgin of Israel. And she shall remain his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days. But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin, then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel, by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

Note what a serious matter this was. There is no other law found in the Old Testament whereby a man entered upon such dire consequences for making a false accusation than in this matter of a woman's virginity. To falsely accuse a woman who had kept herself pure, would result in a fine of a hundred shekels of silver. This was a large sum of money. Yet if the woman was proven to have played the harlot before she was married, she would be taken out and stoned.

People of God, consider how far the church has fallen in esteeming as holy those things that Yahweh says are holy! We live in the midst of a perverse generation, one which calls evil good, and good evil. A man or a woman who has reached adulthood as a virgin in many nations today is considered an object of pity. Youth are carelessly casting away that which God has determined should be guarded with the greatest care, and preserved until marriage. A Father in ancient times would jealously guard his daughter's purity. It would be a great disgrace to discover that she had "played the harlot."

If we were to use the same language that the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and holy men of old to use in writing the Scriptures, would we not have to confess that the streets of our towns and cities, and the very pews of the churches, are filled with whores? Indeed, churches are filled with people who are continually practicing whoredom without repentance.

The use of insulting words such as whore and harlot were employed intentionally by the writers of Scripture. The Spirit was thereby signifying that a tremendous stigma was attached to a woman who allowed men other than her husband to enter into her body, treating that which was designed by Yahweh to be holy as a common and unholy thing. Would not Yahweh be provoked unto great wrath for a man to enter into the Holy of Holies in the Temple as if it were a common thing? Such a man would surely die.

Hebrews 9:6-7

Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, but into the second (the Holy of Holies) only the high priest enters...

Even the High Priest was not permitted to pass beyond the veil except at the prescribed time. If he entered at the wrong time, he would die.

Leviticus 16:2

And Yahweh said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die."

In a parallel to this, man is not to enter into sexual union with woman, except at the

prescribed time.

Leviticus 20:18

If there is a man who lies with a menstruous woman and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has exposed the flow of her blood; thus both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

A woman's flow of menstrual blood had to have ceased for seven days before a man could enter into union with her. Seven days was the time of her purification.

Leviticus 15:19

“When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days.”

The Temple and the Tabernacle also had to be ritually purified before the priests could perform service therein. Are not these things intended to be a profound parable of one another? We observe that there were specific laws pertaining to the purification of a woman before a man could “go in to her” even as there are laws governing the purification of the Tabernacle and the vessels used before the Priests could “go in” and perform their priestly duties.

Yahweh has covered the entire Tabernacle and Temple with holiness. They are sacred, and to be kept pure and undefiled from the pollution of the world. In the same way, Yahweh determined that the body of the woman should be holy. It was to be guarded diligently to maintain purity. Regarding both the Tabernacle of Yahweh, and a man's wife, there was to be no “intercourse” with the world. In a marriage union, the Husband is the High Priest and the Wife is the Tabernacle. **NO ONE CAN ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES EXCEPT THE HIGH PRIEST.**

Before passing on to other matters, I want to share further of the parable demonstrated in the body of the virgin bride. In the design of God, the virgin bride has kept her hymen intact until her wedding night. At that time her husband, High Priest, is to enter in even as Christ entered that Tabernacle in the heavens at His crucifixion.

Hebrews 9:11-12

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all...

At the crucifixion of Christ, as He yielded up His Spirit, we read that the veil of the Temple in Jerusalem was torn in two.

Mark 15:38

Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.



This is a great mystery. Those who are “in Christ” can now enter in through the veil freely. There is no longer any restriction. By Christ yielding up His Spirit, His Spirit was enabled to be imparted to mankind. We receive the seed of Christ even as a woman receives the seed of man. Both are attended with the rending of a veil. Once the veil is rent, then there is free (unrestricted) access from that moment forward.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We can enter “boldly,” that is to say, without fear. What is this place spoken of by the apostle in Hebrews? Where does one “obtain mercy” except at the Mercy Seat, which was located above the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies?

The first time a virgin has sexual relations there is some pain involved. Even so, Christ endured pain, and his mother (the VIRGIN Mary) who witnessed His crucifixion, had a sword pierce her own heart. Yet after the first experience of entry, there is a new freedom. Indeed, there is a great joy and pleasure upon entry from that time forward.

Hebrews 12:2

Fixing our eyes on Yahshua, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...*

* See end note.

There are great mysteries surrounding the sexual union of a man and a woman. I must leave many of them for your own contemplation. People of God, seeing that Yahweh has designed the union of the man and woman to demonstrate such profound and holy matters, should not the union be treated with the greatest reverence and regard? Should we not seek to keep the union of a man and woman inviolate? What are we truly testifying if

we act promiscuously, going outside of the marriage covenant to have sexual relations? It is nothing other than a picture of idolatry.

Deuteronomy 13:6-9

"If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods...' you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. But you shall surely kill him..."

Yahweh would abide no other gods in his presence. He would not permit His people to worship any beside Him. In the same way, the union of a man and woman is to be inviolable. There is to be no breach of the covenant. A man and woman thus joined in a marriage covenant, are to have intercourse with no others as long as they shall live.

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.

The physical transgression of adultery is a symbol of the spiritual transgression of idolatry. The punishment for both is the same. The testimony of the man and woman has not changed in this age of grace. Adultery is still adultery. The woman's body is yet a holy Tabernacle reserved only for one to enter into.

Consider that when a man goes into his virgin bride that a blood covenant is cut. We observed previously that the man's reproductive organ is the one marked by God as the covenant organ. The sign of circumcision is found there. It is the same for the woman. Even as a man experiences a tearing of the flesh and a flow of blood during circumcision, so too is the virgin's flesh torn resulting in a flow of blood when she has her first sexual experience.

The covenant organ of the man literally carries the blood of the woman into the inner chamber. In this way, as High Priest, he is reenacting the work of Christ who as High Priest entered in through the veil and placed His own blood upon the mercy seat. The man and wife are "one flesh," and woman was formed from a remnant taken from man's body, therefore the man is bringing his OWN blood into the place God has called holy.

In the act of first sexual union, a blood covenant is cut. It is a covenant that cannot be broken. The life is in the blood, and the covenant is in force as long as there is life present in those so joined.

Do you see, that what Yahweh has designed is far greater than some earthly contract? Marriage is far more than a compact to establish a relationship of mutual benefit that can be ended when either party determines that the benefit has ended. Marriage is a sacred and holy covenant. It is a covenant in blood. The union of the man and woman is Most Holy.

Many more parallels could be cited, for Yahweh with great skill, wisdom, and purpose has designed the physical human body to give testimony of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Was not the Temple located on the Temple Mound? Even so the entrance to the woman's holy place is through the pubic mound.

Did not the male Priest bring the grain offering into the Temple and Tabernacle? Even so man brings his "seed" into the tabernacle of the woman's body.

Did not the Priest present free will offerings, as well as mandatory offerings in the

Temple? Even so, the man may go into his wife of his free will, but he must also make himself available to the needs of his wife, whether it be his desire to do so, or not.

I Corinthians 7:4-5

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

People of God, let me conclude this portion of teaching by leaving your attention upon the thought of the great holiness Yahweh attaches to these matters. The innermost chamber of the Temple and Tabernacle that man could enter into was called The Most Holy Place, and The Holy of Holies. Similarly, the innermost chamber of the woman that man can enter into is to be viewed with the same sanctity. It is Most Holy!

No one who has a remnant of the Holy Spirit of God can treat as common that which Yahweh has called the holiest of all. May we weep and grieve over the tremendous uncleanness of the people of God today! We have treated as common that which is most holy. May Yahweh grant His people repentance, and establish them in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

End Note: Some may find it objectionable to speak of the work of Christ in terms of sexual union. Do not the objections arise because the people of God have had their thoughts altered to view sex as something common, or even unholy? It is specifically with the goal in mind that the church should begin to see sexual union as MOST HOLY that I am bold enough to make these comparisons. My desire is not to bring Christ down, but rather to raise man up to a place where he esteems as holy that which God calls holy.



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 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.

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. 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.

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 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. Yahweh, 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 Ibhar, 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 Bathsheba 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.

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.

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 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 worshippers, 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 ALWAYS 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.

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 necessary 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 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 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.



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 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 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.

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."

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.

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.

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."

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

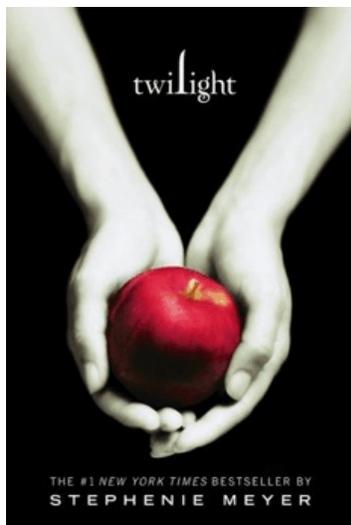


Foundation Stone Four - Life is in the Blood



If you have not kept up with what young people are reading today, the best selling series since *Harry Potter* is the *Twilight* Saga. Millions of copies of the *Twilight* books are being sold, and they are ranked number one in numerous teen categories on Amazon's website, the world's largest bookseller.

The *Twilight* books are focused on a very familiar theme in this hour, vampires. It seems that everywhere one turns today there are books, movies, comics, and television series focused on vampires. Bram Stoker may have planted the seed of this obsession back in 1897 when he published *Dracula*, but the seed has come to full maturity in this hour. I think it is very telling that the latest book covers and advertisements for this series feature an apple in a woman's hands.



It should ever be kept in mind that Satan is the ruler of this fallen world. It is not New York's book industry that chooses the topics that are presented to America, nor Hollywood's

movie and television moguls. It is Satan. Why then the intense focus upon vampirism in this hour? What is Satan up to?

I have for many years pondered the spiritual substance of the laws concerning things mankind might eat, and might not eat. Blood was very much in focus among these laws. Yahweh's first prohibition against partaking of blood preceded the Law of Moses by more than a thousand years. The following injunction was spoken to Noah soon after the flood.

Genesis 9:3-6

Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only ***you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.*** And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.

From the very moment that Yahweh gave man permission to eat meat, He included the prohibition against eating blood. A millennia later, when Yahweh delivered the Law to Moses, He did not neglect to speak once more of the role of blood.

Leviticus 17:10-14

And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, ***I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood,*** and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, '***No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.***' So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. ***For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life.*** Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, '***You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.***'

Yahweh was very precise in these directions. He wanted there to be no misunderstanding. In no way was mankind to partake of the blood of any beast. To this day the orthodox Jews require a Rabbi to be present whenever an animal is slaughtered to insure that the blood is drained from the animal according to the Law of Moses.

Deuteronomy 12:22-25

Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you shall eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. ***Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water. You shall not eat it,*** in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of Yahweh.

Over and over Yahweh repeats the prohibition against eating blood. The reason is given as "the ***life*** is in the blood." The Hebrew word rendered here as ***life*** is the word

nephesh. This word is also translated as **soul.** Yahweh is literally declaring that the **soul** of an animal is in its blood. The soul of man is also in His blood. This is why we find Yahweh declaring to Cain that the blood of his brother Able was crying out to Him from the ground. Able's blood had been spilled upon the ground when Cain slew him. The soul is in the blood, therefore the soul of Able was now crying out from the ground.

What drew my attention to this topic some years ago, causing me to delve into it further, was the repetition of this prohibition in the New Testament. There are over 600 laws in the Torah delivered to Moses at Mount Sinai. Yet when the early church met to determine what laws to specifically pass on to the Gentile converts, they gave only four. Out of these four New Testament instructions to the newly founded churches, two of them focus specifically on the issue of eating blood.

Acts 15:19-20

Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and **from what is strangled and from blood.**

If an animal is killed by strangulation, its blood remains in the meat, therefore such meat was not to be eaten. The church leaders and apostles further added the instruction that the Gentile believers were to abstain from consuming all blood.

We see then that the prohibition against partaking of blood is universal. It is not limited to the Law of Moses. The command to abstain from blood preceded the Law delivered to Moses, and it continues even to this day to those who have died to the Law through the body of Christ.

Romans 7:6

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound..

Those who are in Christ "have been released from the Law," but they have not been released from the prohibition against eating blood. The mystery of life being in the blood is so great that the command to abstain from eating it will never be altered.

We live in a very dark hour. We are seeing an ever deepening darkness fall upon the earth. The greatest and most universal prohibitions given to man by God are being scorned. **Satan is glorifying that which Yahweh has condemned.** He is flooding the world with fantasies of vampires drinking the blood of men, women and children. Many are familiar with such mega-sellers as the Ann Rice vampire novels, the *Twilight* books and movies, and the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. One website on the topic lists over 700 books that contain vampire lore.

What is so important about this subject that Yahweh has forbidden the partaking of blood through all ages down to this present time? Why has Satan spent so much time driving men and women to fantasize about doing that which Yahweh expressly forbids?

In the introduction to this teaching series, it was mentioned that the Hebrew word rendered as "life" is "nephesh." When spoken of in the New Testament, it is translated from the Greek word "psuche." Both nephesh and psuche are words that mean "soul."

Leviticus 17:11

For the life (nephesh) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls (nephesh): for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (nephesh).

KJV

A very deep principle is revealed in this verse. If the translators had been consistent in the translation of the Hebrew word nephesh, they would have written something similar to the following:

*For the **soul** of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for your **souls**, for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the **soul**.*

The following describes the logic of what is stated.

Ezekiel 18:4

The soul who sins will die.

This same truth is expressed in the New Testament.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and **so death spread to all men, because all sinned.**

The wages of sin is death. Death is always the consequence of sin. This is an unalterable law of the universe. Yahweh will not wink at the sin of man. He will not excuse it. The holiness and righteousness of God requires that sin always bears the consequence of death.

Yahweh will not alter this “law of sin and death.” Yet, in His mercy, He has graciously provided man with a substitute. In the Old Testament the soul of a beast could be offered up in place of the soul of a man. This is what atonement was all about. The blood of an animal was sprinkled upon the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies on The Day of Atonement. The sins of the people were before God’s eyes on that day, and the High Priest was making an offering for the people of God. In bringing the blood of bulls and goats he was entreating Yahweh to accept the soul of the animal in the place of man’s soul.

Man deserved to die, for he had sinned. It was Yahweh’s mercy that permitted another to die in the place of man. We know that such offerings had to be made year after year, for they were imperfect. When Yahweh sent His Son to the earth to be offered up in the place of man, to shed His blood, and to place it upon the Mercy Seat in that Tabernacle whose original is in heaven, then the perfect sacrifice had been made. God had exchanged the soul of His Son in place of man’s soul, that man might live.

Hebrews 9:11-14

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal

redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Why did Christ have to shed His blood? ***Because the soul is in the blood.*** Yahshua gave His soul in exchange for the soul of man so that man's soul might not perish.

John 15:13

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life (psuche - soul) for his friends."

Christ rendered His soul as an offering that man's soul might not die. The soul of Christ, like all living beings, is in the blood. He had to shed His blood for man to be redeemed from death. The penalty of sin was paid in full. Man's soul might now live, for the soul of the Son of God had been poured out in man's place.

Isaiah 53:12

Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out His soul (nephesh) to death...

That the soul of an animal or a man is in the blood is a concept that appears strange to the mind of modern man. If you were to ask them where the soul of a man is, most could not tell you.

Understanding that the soul is in the blood, consider why Yahweh forbid mankind to eat the blood of animals. Man could use the flesh of an animal for food, but the soul was not given to be eaten. Why is this so? The body is of the earth, but the soul belongs to God.

Ezekiel 18:4

"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine."

The body was formed of the dust of the earth, and it would return to the earth. The soul was formed by the breath of God, and it must return to God.

Psalms 104:29

You do hide Your face, they are dismayed; You do take away their spirit, they expire, and return to their dust.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Blood could be poured on the altar as an offering to God, for the soul belongs to Yahweh. Man, however, could not partake of it. Neither the souls of animals or people were given to man for his consumption. The soul is holy unto God.

Partaking of blood is the same as partaking of the soul of another. This is made

abundantly clear in the words of Christ.

John 6:53-57

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

This saying offended the Jews, and many of Christ's disciples left Him after hearing these words. His words were intended to be understood spiritually.

John 6:63

"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Christ was declaring that in order for man to pass from death into life, he must have the life of Christ in him. Mankind was under a sentence of death ever since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. Yahweh said to Adam, "on the day that you eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die."

The blood of Yahshua is the only provision that Yahweh has made for man to pass from death into life. There is salvation in no other name. Mohammed cannot save man. Buddha cannot save man. Only one who had been born of holy seed and lived a sinless life could offer His soul as an atonement for mankind. This One is Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah.

When Christ told His disciples that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, He was speaking of spiritual realities. Man must receive the spirit of Christ into his being that he might have life. We must be born again. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We receive the life of Christ by receiving His seed.

I Peter 1:23

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

Matthew 13:24

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field."

Mankind is the field. The seed is the Word of God. Christ is "the Word made flesh." As we receive the Word (Christ) and believe, conception takes place. The life of Christ appears within our own being. It continues to grow and mature until we can say with Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This process will continue until "Christ is fully formed in us."

Galatians 4:19

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you...

Ephesians 4:13-14

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

We must drink Christ's blood if we are to have any life in us. We must become one with Christ.

John 17:20-23

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one...**"

The life is in the blood. All those who drink the cup of Christ's communion are symbolically testifying that they are partakers of the very life (psuche - soul) of Christ. He is in them, and they are in Him.

In no other realm among man do we observe such imagery of two souls becoming one, other than in sexual union. Indeed, we are made one with Christ by becoming partakers of His seed. The seed of Christ is not received by physical union, but by spiritual union. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

I Corinthians 6:16-17

Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Yahweh has given us the physical union of a man and a woman to serve as a parable of the spiritual union between God and man. He also uses the symbolism of a man drinking the blood of another to speak of this mystical union of two beings. Seeing that He uses both illustrations to reveal the same spiritual truth, we should understand that a union of the soul occurs in both instances.

Many cultures from ancient times understood that the soul of an animal is in its blood. The practice of certain American Indian tribes who would eat the beating heart of a wolf or a buffalo was based upon this understanding. Some aboriginal tribes would also drink the blood of some great warrior that they had slain in battle. By doing so they believed that they were taking on the strength of the other animal or person.

The principle of the soul being in the blood is what Satan has focused upon as he stirs up the present fascination with vampires. In the *Twilight* series Edward is portrayed as a vampire who falls madly in love with Bella, who is human. The attraction of Bella's blood is so overpowering that Edward is at first repulsed by her, for he has committed himself to abstain from drinking human blood.

The attraction between the two is very much sexual in nature. Even as a woman may fantasize of being irresistible to a man, or to men in general, so Bella is cast as a character who is lusted after by numerous individuals, some good and some evil.

Today, women live out this fantasy through making themselves sexually alluring. An almost unbelievable expense and effort is poured forth in pursuit of achieving a sexually alluring image. What was unheard of a generation ago, is now commonplace. Women, young and old, are having their bodies surgically sculpted and manipulated to increase their ability to arouse an animal lust in man. The desire to be lusted after is found deep within the carnal nature. The *Twilight* series is merely one of many fantasies Satan presents to the world today to stir up that which is primal and forbidden.

The attraction for the male is that he becomes the hunter, seeking to partake of that which is most intimate and forbidden. The male vampire that drinks the blood of a female is in effect drawing her life, her very soul, into his body. Whether men and women understand these things, or not, the same passions and desires are present as they seek after sexual experience. What makes sexual intercourse between a man and woman something that the fallen nature lusts after with intensity, is not merely the momentary physical pleasure. It is the desire to enter into union with another soul.

This drive to be in union with the soul of another is very evident in the vampire fantasies Satan is flooding the world with. The soul is in the blood, and blood is what is lusted after. What is sometimes less obvious, is that the same desire for soul-union is present in the sexual infidelities played out millions of times a day.

Even as Yahweh forbade men to drink blood, He has also forbidden illicit sexual relations. Every time there is a physical union between a man and a woman, there is a sharing of the soul of the other.

Consider that the consequences of receiving another person's tainted blood through needle sharing, or blood transfusions, is the same as having sexual intercourse with them. Sexually transmitted diseases are communicated through the blood. Whatever is in one person's bloodstream enters the bloodstream of the one with whom they are sexually intimate. HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, chlamydia, and other diseases are transmitted when the soul of one person mixes with the soul of another in an illicit manner.

Is it not interesting that we speak of partaking of the bread and wine of Christ as "communion," and that STD's are said to be "communicable?" Both speak of a very deep level of intimacy. There is a sharing of two souls in both instances. It is little wonder that the relationship between Christ and the church is spoken of in terms of a marriage union.

We have seen in this post that:

- The soul is in the blood.
- Eating blood has ALWAYS been forbidden,
- Drinking the blood of another is a symbol of being a partaker of their spirit, or soul.
- Sexual intimacy also involves a joining of two souls.
- Yahweh has established prohibitions against sexual union outside of marriage.

Why does the Father not allow His children to engage in "free sex"? Why must there always be a blood covenant between those who experience sexual intimacy with one

another? This will be the topic of the following chapters.

End Note: Satan's indoctrination of today's youth through such wildly popular books and movies as the *Twilight* series, reveals the polarization occurring at this time. Yahweh is calling a remnant of His people out of Babylon, even leading them to disassociate with carnal Christians, that he might purge, purify and refine a Bride for His Son. At the same time, Satan is leading the world to a passionate harlotry, and his focus in this instance is particularly upon the youth.

Some insight is gained by understanding the name of the main female character in the *Twilight* series. Her name is Bella, which is short for Isabella.

According to Strong's Dictionary of Greek and Hebrew words, both the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament pronunciation of the name Jezebel bears a striking resemblance to the name Isabel. Following is how Strong's records it.

NT:2403

Iezabel (ee-ed-zab-ale'); of Hebrew origin [OT:348]; Jezabel (i.e. Jezebel), a Tyrian woman (used as a synonym of a termagant or false teacher):

OT:348

'Iyzebel (ee-zeh'-bel); from OT:336 and OT:2083; Izebel, the wife of king Ahab:

The Bible describes Jezebel as a woman who sought to rule men by seduction and allure. She is described as painting her face, and adorning herself seductively.

II Kings 9:30

When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head, and looked out the window.

In recent *Twilight* posters, Bella is depicted with the forbidden fruit in her hands. She is a seductress. As Eve invited Adam to join in her sin, so does Bella invite Edward to partake of that which is forbidden. In a very literal way, she herself has become the forbidden fruit. The advertising companies have played up the similarity between Bella offering herself to Edward for him to bite her, and Eve presenting the forbidden fruit to Adam.

Millions of young girls are fantasizing about attaining the same powerful allure as Bella. And millions of young men are being led to fantasize about tasting of the forbidden fruit.

We live in an hour when the world is growing much darker. It is at such a time that the glory of God must arise upon His people. Such a glory will only be seen in those who are fully committed to God. The people of God must count the cost of a full surrender to the Holy Spirit. They must die to their own desires, and live for the pleasure of God.

The church has not been able to counter the works of Satan, for the people of God are living compromised lives.



Prelude to Foundation Stone Five - The Hidden Cost of Free Sex

It is one thing to know that Yahweh forbids sexual intercourse outside of marriage, it is quite another thing to understand why. Perhaps you have never pondered this topic. Seeing that men and women have a strong attraction to physical union with one another, and observing that society at large is ever prone to promiscuity, one might well ask, "What harm is there in engaging in free sex?"

Without a doubt, men and women should obey God whether they understand the reason for a command, or not. Even as a small child should heed the command of their parent to not put their hand on the stove, so too should mankind obey God regardless of whether they perceive the reason for the command.

It is natural for a child to learn the reason behind many of the commands as they mature. They perceive the thought behind the admonition to not play in the street, and to not talk to strangers, etc..

I am persuaded that our Father would also have His sons and daughters to come to a place of understanding the purpose behind the command to not commit fornication, or adultery.

Those who consider the reason for God's prohibition against fornication and adultery may at first think that Yahweh's commandments are given to protect them from the scourge of sexually transmitted diseases. There is real reason for concern here. The incidence of STDs is staggering. In America the percentage of men and women infected with an STD reveals the rampant promiscuity in the land. The following statistics are provided by the Centers for Disease Control.

An estimated 2,291,000 non-institutionalized U.S. civilians ages 14-39 are infected with Chlamydia...

Approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV (Human Papilloma Virus), and another 6.2 million people become newly infected each year. At least 50% of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV infection at some point in their lives...

Nationwide, at least 45 million people ages 12 and older, or one out of five adolescents and adults, have had genital HSV (Herpes) infection...

CDC estimates that more than 700,000 persons in the U.S. get new gonorrheal infections each year...

Each year in the United States, it is estimated that more than 1 million women experience an episode of acute PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease). More than 100,000 women become infertile each year as a result of PID, and a large proportion of the ectopic pregnancies occurring every year are due to the consequences of PID...

In the United States, health officials reported over 36,000 cases of syphilis in 2006...

Trichomoniasis is the most common curable STD in young, sexually active women. An estimated 7.4 million new cases occur each year in women and men.

[Source: Centers for Disease Control Website]

This information reveals that 'free sex' is not free of consequences. A study of this topic reveals that the negative health effects of becoming infected with various STDs include: genital lesions, blisters, bumps, pustules, cankers, rashes, swelling, discomfort, pain, etc.; vaginal and penile discharge; sterility; increased infant mortality; blindness; dementia; arthritis and other inflammatory diseases; susceptibility to secondary infections; cancer; and even death. This is not an exhaustive list, but merely a sampling of the detrimental effects of STDs.

Many STDs are not curable. Some require lifelong treatment, and the risk is always present of passing the infection to every other person with whom an individual is sexually intimate. The incidence of certain STDs is so high that in some population groups half the population are infected. The website *Herpes Online*, provides the following information.

It is overwhelming the number of people that do not realize just how strong the genital herpes statistics are. Genital herpes is a very common virus that is affecting a large number of the adult population these days.

In a recent study to gather genital herpes statistics, a nationally representative study showed that genital herpes infection is very common in the United States. Nationwide, 45 million people ages 12 and older, or one out of five (possibly as many as 1 in 4) of the total adolescent and adult population, are infected with HSV-2.

When taking genital herpes statistics into account, look around you at any given time and recognize based on the genital herpes statistics just how many people are likely to have the virus.

HSV-2 infection is more common in women (approximately one out of four women) than in men (almost one out of five). This is according to the same genital herpes statistics research. This may be due to male-to-female transmission being more efficient than female-to-male transmission.

HSV-2 infection has also been found to be more common in blacks (45.9%) than in whites (17.6%)...

Ongoing genital herpes statistics research since the late 1970s, indicate the number of Americans with genital herpes infection has increased 30%. The largest increase is currently occurring in young white teens. HSV-2 infection is now five times more common in 12- to 19-year-old whites, and it is twice as common in young adults ages 20 to 29 than it was 20 years ago.

Genital herpes is caused by the transmission of a virus from one individual to another via sexual intercourse. The statistics above reveal the extent of sexual promiscuity in society. To have such a large portion of the population infected there must be frequent sexual activity among a large number of sexual partners.

Some STDs are bacterial, the most common being chlamydia. The peril of many infections is that they remain without obvious symptoms in a great many individuals. It is estimated that over half of the women infected with chlamydia do not know they have it. Yet, left untreated, it can lead to serious consequences. One fact that I became aware of as I began this study is that both gonorrhea and chlamydia can cause arthritis.

About 15,000 men develop reactive arthritis due to chlamydia infection each year in the U.S., and about 5,000 are permanently affected by it. It can occur in both

sexes, though is more common in men.
[Source: Wikipedia Article on Chlamydia]

An article titled Venereal Arthritis shares the following information:

Venereal Arthritis

When a young person has chronic, unexplained pain in a joint, this might be the last thing a doctor would suspect. But there are sexually transmitted diseases that, left untreated, can cause arthritis.

By Laurie Udesky
CONSUMER HEALTH INTERACTIVE

Joshua Heller wasn't worried when he noticed a painless knot below his right ankle in February 1994. A couple of months later, he felt a dull ache in his right foot, but the 26-year-old chef continued working his usual long hours at his family's seaside restaurant. In his spare time, he played racquetball and coached two local sports teams.

By summer, periodic shooting pains in his instep forced him to restrict his activity and stay off his feet. In September, an odd array of symptoms -- pins and needles, shooting pain, and constant aching -- left him with a constant limp.

That's when Heller (not his real name) first reported the problem to a doctor, who diagnosed it as tendinitis and put a cast on his right foot and ankle. Two weeks later his left foot began to hurt. The doctor shrugged it off, saying the new symptom resulted from favoring that leg. But the left foot swelled and the pain grew. After that, Heller saw three orthopedists -- experts in bones, muscles, and tendons. They tried surgery to remove fluid in his right foot and more casting. Nothing worked.

Nearly two years after he first noticed the lump below his ankle, Heller was in unbearable pain, and no doctor could tell him precisely what was wrong. "Both feet were so bad that I almost couldn't walk anymore," recalls Heller, who is now 34.

Finally, he saw a rheumatologist who discovered that he had an uncommon form of arthritis caused by a sexually transmitted disease (STD), typically gonorrhea or, as in Heller's case, chlamydia. This condition, often called venereal arthritis, is practically unknown to the general public, and its diagnosis eludes many doctors. But the sexually transmitted diseases that can lead to venereal arthritis are on the rise in the United States. After decades of declining rates, the number of reported cases of gonorrhea began increasing, but now appears to have reached a plateau at an estimated 355,991 cases in 2007. What's more, reported cases of chlamydia have doubled since 1997, and in 2007 more than 1.1 million chlamydial infections were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The disease is alarmingly common among teens and young adults. In a study of more than 3,000 inner-city teenage girls published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, 29.1 percent tested positive for chlamydia.

Chlamydia: An often silent disease

Equally troubling is that chlamydia sometimes causes few outward symptoms, especially in women, so people may have no idea they have it until the disease is in an advanced stage. Even if they do, they may not realize that the bacteria, if unchecked, can spread to the joints. Once it does, it can cause excruciating pain and, in some cases, permanent joint damage and deformity.

[Source: Website - A Healthy Me]

Reading the words above, I am reminded of the words of the apostle Paul to the Christians in Corinth.

I Corinthians 11:27-30

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord... For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

The apostle Paul declares that among the saints at Corinth were a number who were partaking of the body and blood of Christ in an unworthy manner. We should not think that Paul was merely speaking of people acting as gluttons and drunkards while participating in their love feasts, although this was occurring. The wider understanding of the apostle's words is that those who had become partakers of the life of Christ, symbolized in the bread and the wine, were living in an ungodly manner. Consequently, many were sick and some had even died.

Reading the same epistle to the Corinthian church we find that there were a number who were fornicating, and even having sex with temple prostitutes. Without a doubt, some of these Christians were sick, and some had died. Sin has consequences, though many people very often do not make any connection to their sin and the consequences in their body.

How many Christians today, upon receiving a diagnosis of sickness in their body would begin rebuking the devil, praying for healing, or standing upon some Scriptural verse to claim their healing? Few take the time to discern the reason for the sickness. Oftentimes, sickness is the result of past, or present, sin.

James 5:14-16

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and ***if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.***

There is a great amount of sickness among the body of Christ today. There is also much sin in the body that has not been repented of, nor confessed. Knowing that those in the church have practiced fornication and adultery to practically the same degree as those outside, it should be no surprise that much of the sickness among Christians is the result of rampant sexual transgression. How many are experiencing sickness in their bodies while not understanding its link to sins in their life?

Let me say here that not all sickness is the result of sin. Christ declared that sickness was caused by many reasons. At times an individual has sinned leading to sickness. At other times their parents have sinned. Sometimes a sickness is due to demonic oppression. At other times a person is sick that the glory of God might be revealed in their healing. There are many causes of sickness. Without question, one of the leading causes of all types of illness and disease is sin.

This is one reason why it is so important that Christians abstain from sin, and if they have sinned, that they repent of the sin and seek Yahweh's forgiveness. Yahweh has caused there to be consequences of sin in the lives of people.

We have only been looking at one aspect of these consequences thus far. There are many other dire consequences of violating Yahweh's commands to abstain for fornication and adultery. There are negative mental consequences that occur in the lives of those who are sexually promiscuous.

The blood stream serves as a source for transmitting sexual disease, and the previous post in this series revealed that "the soul is in the blood." Each STD stands as a parable of something evil, impure, and unclean in the soul of another person that has been transmitted during the act of sexual intercourse.

Do you think that only physical things are passed between two people who are sexually intimate? Far from it. There are many soulish things that are passed as well. Everything that is in one person's blood is given access to the body of the other person through sexual contact. Because "the soul is in the blood," there is not only a union of two bodies, but a union of two souls during sexual intercourse.

The body is designed to be a temple. The temple of all men and women are filled with many things, some clean, and some unclean. One cannot enter a polluted temple and worship there without coming away with the stain of the pollution. When men and women enter into sexual union, joining two temples together, it is in an act of intimate worship. There are things transferred both physically and via the souls of the two who are joined.

Yahweh never intended sexual intercourse to be an open and communal activity. From the beginning, sexual union was to be only within the context of marriage. When sex is kept inside of marriage the entryway for sexually transmitted diseases is shut. The temple remains pure. Both the body and the soul of the man and woman are isolated from the many unclean and injurious influences found in the bodies of those who are acting promiscuously.

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

People of God, the judgment of God begins in this lifetime, not in the next. Many are even now suffering the effects of God's judgment because they treated as unholy that which Yahweh declared to be holy.

Beyond the physical damage to the body wrought by unbridled sexual lust, there are other detrimental effects. Many men and women who have been sexually promiscuous prior to marriage find that they have difficulty being intimate with their spouse. A husband may find that he lacks a strong attachment to the soul of a wife who has given herself to other men. Likewise, a man that has engaged in fornication will often find it difficult to enter into a full union of soul with his wife, leaving her dissatisfied with the lack of intimacy between

them. The souls of those who are sexually promiscuous become divided and dispersed even as water is poured out in the streets.

Proverbs 5:15-18

Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.

For those who care to pursue the matter, there are spiritual parables that can be gleaned from a study of sexually transmitted diseases. The effects of the various viruses and bacteria upon the body would prove insightful as one looks at the same consequences of unfaithfulness upon the body of Christ, or even the body of the individual.

For example, some STDs cause men to become impotent and women to become sterile. The fruitfulness of the man and woman's life is therefore diminished. This is true spiritually as well as physically.

In all STDs there is the risk of the person infected passing along something harmful to others with whom they are intimate. This too is a spiritual parable. If we do not guard our lives, and walk in righteousness, the impurity in our life will affect all others with whom we communicate and interact.

It was mentioned that some STDs lead to debilitating effects such as arthritis. This renders the body immobile. So too does the body of Christ, and the individual, become hindered in their "walk with Christ" when they have pursued a course of sensuality and sin.

These are but a few obvious examples of parables to be found in a study of the consequences of sexual promiscuity. Undoubtedly those with understanding of the biological and anatomical processes involved would be able to glean even more detailed spiritual insights. Yahweh has designed the physical creation to show forth spiritual truth.

We have not yet touched on the root of this matter. Why does Yahweh not desire for men and women to be promiscuous? Certainly, it is to spare them the negative consequences spoken of here. However, there is a deeper issue at the heart of all. Yahweh caused there to be consequences for sexual infidelity because it is a transgression of His own character and nature. The true reasons that Yahweh does not desire for men and women to commit fornication and adultery are spiritual in nature.



Foundation Stone Five - The Polluted Land

We observed previously that Yahweh uses parables to provide understanding to His people. We looked at the parable of the soul in its two halves, as it is manifested in the cutting of a blood covenant. We observed many truths as we looked at the parable of the body being a temple of God. With the laying of this fifth foundation stone we will look at the truths that are revealed through the parable of the land being a married woman.

We should not be surprised that Yahweh compares the bodies of men and women to a portion of the earth, for man's body was formed of the dust of the earth.

Genesis 2:7

Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground...

Genesis 3:19

"For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Let us begin by looking at a Scripture where Yahweh compares the land of Israel to His wife.

Isaiah 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet... It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," ***And your land, "Married"***; For Yahweh delights in you, and ***to Him your land will be married...*** And ***as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.***

If God uses the imagery of His being married to the land of Israel, then there must also be a parallel image between man and his bride, for man was created to be the image and likeness of God. We find this parallel in Scriptures, for a man's wife is at times spoken of through the analogy of land.

Jeremiah 3:1

God says, "If a husband divorces ***his wife***, and she goes from him, and belongs to another man, will he still return to her? ***Will not that land be completely polluted?***

When the Holy Spirit inspired Jeremiah to write of land being polluted, we understand that ***land*** is a metaphor for a man's wife. To this day it is still common to refer to a nation in terms of a woman. The following picture is of Lady Columbia, the female personification of America.



Lady Columbia

I do not think that Yahweh would depict America as a beautiful woman dressed in white. The land of America has truly become polluted by the grievous sins committed in the land. The blood of more than 50 million babies has stained the land, and the stain cannot be washed away.

Numbers 35:33-34

So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I Yahweh dwell among the children of Israel.

Describing the land as a married woman is a well utilized device used by Yahweh in the Scriptures. There is benefit in examining these passages, for they reveal many things, including Yahweh's abhorrence of sexual defilement, as well as the grounds for divorce, and the restoration of one who has been divorced.

In the following passage we see Yahweh describing the adulterous behavior of His wives, Israel and Judah. He speaks of divorcing Israel and sending her away from His presence, for she had stained herself with the pollution of her adultery.

Jeremiah 3:6-9

Then Yahweh said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "***Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there.***" And I thought, 'After she has done all these things, she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw that for ***all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce***, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also. ***And it came about because of the lightness of her harlotry, that she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.***"

In the previous post in this series we looked at the scourge of venereal disease. Yahweh so designed His creation that when men and women act in an adulterous or sexually immoral manner, their bodies become infected with disease. The many diseases are often abhorrent in appearance, resulting in cankers, blisters, pustules, and various physical deformities. The blood stream of those infected can be compared to a polluted river within a nation. Death is present in that current that should be devoted to the preservation of life.

Whenever God's chosen people embraced another god, He viewed the act as infidelity, and described it as whoredom and adultery. As the Israelites built their high places for the worship of these foreign gods, Yahweh viewed the land as polluted and greatly defiled. Israel and Judah embraced many gods. They worshiped the Baals. They worshiped Molech and Ashtoreth and Milcom and various other gods from the nations around them.

As we have observed in previous chapters of this series, man could have more than one wife, but a wife was permitted only one husband. This is a parable of God with man. Yahweh may take many peoples and nations to Himself, but the nations are only permitted to serve Him as God. For Israel or Judah to embrace another deity was viewed in the same way as the wife of a man spreading her legs and inviting strange men to be sexually promiscuous with her.

Ezekiel 16:25

"You built yourself a high place at the top of every street, and made your beauty abominable; and you spread your legs to every passer-by to multiply your harlotry."

These are profound parables. Yahweh uses this metaphor of His people being His wife throughout both the Old and New Testaments. He speaks of the faithlessness and treachery of His people as they forsake Him and embrace foreigners. Yahweh testifies that He finds such betrayal and lewd behavior to be abhorrent.

Psalms 106:34-40

They did not destroy the peoples, as Yahweh commanded them, but they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. **Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds.** Therefore **the anger of Yahweh was kindled** against His people, **and He abhorred His inheritance.**

Yahweh has created man so that he too would be jealous of his wife. Man is created in the image and likeness of God, and Yahweh is jealous for His people. He is always angered and abhorred when His wife acts in an adulterous manner. When He found no repentance in His wife for her harlotry, He gave her a writ of divorce and sent her away. This He did with both Israel and Judah. Israel was sent away to the land of Assyria, and when Judah repeated the sins of her sister, she was sent to Babylon.

It should be understood from this that Yahweh sees nothing unrighteous in the act of sending away a wife that has acted in an adulterous manner. For the reason of unchastity, He has ever permitted a man to send away a wife. Yahweh would have mankind understand

through the marriage relationship between a man and his wife the jealousy with which He looks upon His people.

Exodus 34:13-16

You are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim - for you shall not worship any other god, **for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God** - lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice; and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods, and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.

Jealousy toward a wife is not an evil thing. It would be an evil thing for a man to not care whether his wife was having sexual relations with other men. Some who are hardened in their sin practice such "open marriages" today, but those who do so have departed far from God whose name is Jealous.

The Jews were hard-hearted, and the men were prone to send their wives away for any transgression at all. If the wife simply did not please them anymore, they would send them away. This is something Yahweh would not do. It was only for the sake of unchastity, for sexual immorality, that Yahweh would send away His wife.

The Jewish leaders came to Christ and inquired of Him concerning this matter. They asked Yahshua if it was permitted for a man to send away a wife for any reason at all. He responded:

Matthew 5:32

"I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality (porneia) causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

The Greek word rendered here as "sexual immorality" is porneia. It is translated in a variety of ways, including "unchastity," "fornication," "adultery," and "uncleanness." Christ was declaring that sexual immorality was the only justification for a man to send away a wife with a writing of divorce. If a man sent her away for any reason besides sexual impurity, he would be causing her to commit adultery.

It is a terrible thing for any man to influence another to commit adultery. It is an act of great treachery for a man to cause his own wife to have to commit adultery by sending her out from his presence for any reason other than that she had already acted treacherously toward the marriage covenant by opening her legs to another man.

God viewed His wives, Israel and Judah to be polluted and defiled when they embraced other gods. It is natural that a man would hold the same view toward his wife when she has embraced other men.

Yahweh has created men so that those who are righteous as He is righteous, have an aversion to being joined to a woman who is polluted. Yahweh speaks of a man taking back a wife who has been polluted by another man as an act of abomination.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in

his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since ***she has been defiled***; for ***that is an abomination before Yahweh***, and you shall not bring sin on the land which Yahweh your God gives you as an inheritance.”

Some have contemplated whether it is right for a man or woman today to return to a spouse that has been divorced and married to another. The Law delivered to Moses strictly forbid such an action. Yahweh said that the wife in such a case had been defiled, and that it was an abominable thing in the sight of God for the wife to return to the first husband after she had been polluted by intercourse with another man.

The Law was given in order that man might identify sin and transgression as Yahweh does. The Law reveals those things that are clean in Yahweh's sight, and those things that are unclean. The Law makes a distinction between the holy and the profane.

A woman who has acted adulterously is unclean. She is described as polluted and defiled. It is a very detestable thing in God's eyes for either Himself, or a man, to be joined to one who has polluted herself and made herself abhorrent. This is the language that the Bible uses to describe these things.

Although the Law describes for us those things that are clean and unclean, it does not reveal the entire counsel of God. The Law was without mercy. “The soul that sinned must die.” Aaron was the first High Priest of the Law, and he observed firsthand the merciless character of the Law. When Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu transgressed the command of God, failing to show reverence to His holiness, and the offered strange fire before Him, fire that God did not recognize as holy, Yahweh struck them both dead.

Aaron was confronted with the death of two of his sons in a single moment of time, and the loss was tremendous. Yahweh was revealing to Aaron that those who serve Him must treat Him as holy. Yahweh was demonstrating the awfulness of His Holy character. Men who are unclean cannot stand in His presence. The Law was given to show mankind the vast gulf between the holiness of Yahweh and the sinfulness of man. Those who understood the difference should truly tremble in fear, realizing their uncleanness.

This is the purpose of the Law, to show the abominable depths to which mankind has fallen, and to show to them their need of a Savior. The law included types and shadows of the mercy of God to come, for their were sacrifices and offerings that could be made to atone for the sins of mankind. Yet, the central purpose of the Law was to present all men as unclean before God that every mouth my be stopped, and that no flesh should glory in Yahweh's presence.

This severity of the Law was revealed in what happened to Aaron's two sons. Not only were they slain, but God forbid Aaron to even mourn for them.

Leviticus 10:1-7

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before Yahweh, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of Yahweh

and consumed them, and they died before Yahweh. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what Yahweh spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent... Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you may not die, and that He may not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which Yahweh has brought about. You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, lest you die; for the Lord's anointing oil is upon you." So they did according to the word of Moses.

If God in His holiness were to treat us with justice we would all perish. Yet He has determined to show to mankind mercy.

James 2:13

For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

The Law revealed the justice of God, and its judgments were accordingly severe. An adulterer, or adulteress was to be stoned to death. One who violated the Sabbath was to be stoned to death. A rebellious son was to be taken outside the camp and stoned to death. Mankind has fallen into great transgression, departing from the holy character of Yahweh, and the consequences are severe. The Law showed this seriousness of man's fall. Christ came to reveal the mercy of God. If we stop at the Law, we will all be accounted transgressors.

Galatians 2:16-17

A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Yahshua, even we have believed in Christ Yahshua, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since ***by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.***

Galatians 3:11

Now that ***no one is justified by the Law before God*** is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."

What does this mean, but that no man can attain to the righteousness that is revealed in the Law. We are altogether unclean. We stand condemned by the Law, for this was its ministry; it was given to reveal to man his condemnation.

II Corinthians 3:7-9

But if ***the ministry of death***, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if ***the ministry of condemnation*** has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

What was engraved in letters on stones? It was the Law of God delivered to Moses.

The apostle Paul describes the role of the Law as “the ministry of death,” and “the ministry of condemnation.” The error of those who want to be ruled by the ministry of the Law is revealed in Christ’s confrontation with the Jewish leaders over the woman who was caught in the act of adultery.

John 8:3-11

Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Yahshua stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Yahshua was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Yahshua had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Yahshua said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

The ministry of the Law was condemnation, but Christ’s words were “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” The Law was given to condemn the world, but Christ did not come for the same purpose.

John 3:17

"For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through Him."

Luke 9:54-56

And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; ***for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.***"]

Moses delivered the Law to God’s people. The Jews thought that this Law could save them, for they were greatly deluded in thinking that they could attain to the righteous standards of the Law. In His sermon on the mount, Yahshua revealed that they were mistaken. He revealed the perfection that Yahweh required for men to be justified in His sight. It was not enough to keep from committing adultery, for if a man looked upon another man’s wife with lust, he had committed adultery with her in his heart. It was not enough to not murder another man, for if one were to be angry with his brother without a cause he was in danger of judgment. It was not enough to love one’s friends and hate one’s enemies, for God causes the Sun to shine on the just and the unjust, and He sends the blessing of rain upon all.

Over and over, Yahshua revealed to the Jews that the Law could only condemn them. It could never present them as righteous in the eyes of Yahweh. The law was given to accuse

and convict men of sin before a holy God.

John 5:45

"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; ***the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.***"

If we understand these things, then we can begin to understand why God at times violates the commands of His own Law. The Law only revealed one aspect of Yahweh's character, His holiness, but it did not reveal His mercy. The Law demanded that the one caught in adultery should be stoned, but Christ expressed forgiveness and mercy to the adulteress, while admonishing her to sin no more.

Let us then consider the words of the Law that we have read in Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 1-4. Yahweh said that a woman who had been sent away and joined to another could not return to the first husband, for that was an abomination. Such a woman is defiled, and according to the righteousness of God this is true. Yet there is mercy even for such an one as this.

Yahweh revealed this when He sent Israel and Judah away with a writ of divorce. They were joined to their lovers, and played the harlot with abandonment. Yet a time came when Yahweh remembered His love for them, and He decided to express His mercy. He took them back, which is something that was detestable to His righteousness. Yet mercy triumphs over judgment! Hallelujah!

Jeremiah 3:8

"And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, ***I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce...***"

Yahweh has declared that the adulteries of Israel are as abominable to Him as the adulteries of an unfaithful wife. He declares through Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 3:1

God says, "If a husband divorces his wife, and she goes from him, and belongs to another man, will he still return to her? Will not that land be completely polluted? But you are a harlot with many lovers; Yet you turn to Me," declares Yahweh.

What is Yahweh declaring? He is saying that Israel has acted just like one who has been divorced due to her adulteries and has been joined to another. She is completely polluted. He asks, "Will such a woman return to her first husband? Will not that land be completely polluted?" The answers are rhetorical, "Yes, she is polluted. No, she has no right to return to her first husband for she has defiled herself."

Yet, the remarkable thing is that Yahweh allowed her to come back. Indeed, He even sought after her to bring her back to Himself. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Jeremiah 3:12-14

"Return, faithless Israel," declares Yahweh; ***"I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,"*** declares Yahweh; ***"I will not be angry forever.*** Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against Yahweh your God and have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree, and you

have not obeyed My voice," declares Yahweh. ***"Return, O faithless sons,"*** declares Yahweh.

We see this same merciful heart of God overcoming His righteous indignation and judgment as recorded in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 39:25-29

Therefore thus says Yahweh God, "Now I shall restore the fortunes of Jacob, and ***have mercy*** on the whole house of Israel; and I shall be jealous for My holy name. And ***they shall forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me***, when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am Yahweh their God because ***I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land***; and I will leave none of them there any longer. And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares Yahweh God.

In His righteous anger and jealousy Yahweh could have cast His wife away forever, for she had played the harlot. Yet in His mercy He sought after her and drew her back to Himself.

As we proceed to address the specific questions that arise concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage, we must ever keep in mind the mercy of God. The Law of God is a minister of condemnation. The Law slays men and women in their sins. Yet God, being rich in His mercy, has put away His anger and ever seeks to save that which is lost. Christ came to save mankind, not to condemn, yet at the same time He says, "Go and sin no more."

We must ever keep the kindness and the severity of God in mind. His grace does not give men and woman license to sin. All who seek to abuse Yahweh's grace will reap the consequences of their error. "Do not be deceived, for God will not be mocked." Men and women will reap what they sow. If they continue to sow to the flesh after having been made partakers of the grace and mercy of God, will they not reap according to their error?

Where should we end this post? Should we end saying God is merciful, or should we end saying God is righteous and holy and to be feared? Let us end by declaring both.

Psalms 85:10

Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

The land that is polluted can be redeemed. That which has been defiled may yet again be sanctified. Let us take hope, and let us "go and sin no more."



Foundation Stone Six - Betrothal

We now come to look at the beautiful pattern and parable of betrothal. I hesitate to describe this as Hebrew betrothal, or a Jewish betrothal custom, for the pattern to be examined here is one that Yahweh Himself uses to describe the relation between His Son and the Bride of Christ.

In our modern society we have little to compare with betrothal. Engagements are as different from Biblical betrothal as co-habitation is from the marriage covenant. Following is an excerpt from the online Jewish Encyclopedia.

The term "betrothal" in Jewish law must not be understood in its modern sense; that is, the agreement of a man and a woman to marry, by which the parties are not, however, definitely bound, but which may be broken or dissolved without formal divorce. Betrothal or engagement such as this is not known either to the Bible or to the Talmud, and only crept in among the medieval and modern Jews through the influence of the example of the Occidental nations among whom they dwelt...

Although there are varying examples of the way in which betrothals and marriages were conducted in Scripture, there are certain foundational precepts that were established by Yahweh, and written about in the Law. Beyond this, we have the very definite pattern manifested in the relationship between Christ and His Bride.

Most Christians are familiar with the symbolism of Christ being a Bridegroom, and the Church (Ekklesia, the Called-Out ones), being His bride. The apostle Paul speaks of the saints being "betrothed" to Christ.

II Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have **betrothed** you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The betrothal spoken of here refers to a marriage contract. It is not the same as becoming engaged today, for modern engagements are not considered legally binding. The betrothal would be more akin to a bride and groom signing the marriage certificate, and filing it with the court. A betrothal was a binding agreement. Once a man and woman were betrothed, they were considered husband and wife, though they would not live together, nor the union be consummated until the wedding night.

In the Old Testament, a betrothed virgin was referred to as the wife of the man to whom she was espoused.

Deuteronomy 22:23-24

"If there is a girl who is **a virgin betrothed** to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's **wife**.

One thing we observe repeatedly in the Scriptural references to betrothal is that the

woman betrothed is described as a virgin. Paul said that he had betrothed the church to Christ that he might present her to him “as a chaste virgin.” The passage just cited from Deuteronomy 22 speaks of “a virgin betrothed.” The will and design of Yahweh is revealed in these words. He intended for a young woman to remain a virgin until her wedding night. This alone constitutes righteous behavior.

As we have seen in previous chapters of this series, the first experience of sexual intercourse for a woman fulfills the types and patterns of a blood covenant. It is an aberration, an unseemly and entirely inappropriate action for a young woman to give her virginity to one man and then to marry another. It is unthinkable that she should cut a blood covenant with a man that is not her husband for life.

Consider the example of two men cutting covenant with one another. It would be considered an act of treachery to go through all the forms of the blood covenant, signifying that two souls are joined as one, while there is no intent in the heart of those joined to honor the covenant. You cut covenant with a person to whom you are committed for life, binding yourself in blood. Yet men and women commit such absurdities and unseemly and treacherous actions without batting an eye. Such ones are testifying that they have no regard for the righteous and holy ways of God.

It was so important that a woman remain a virgin in order that she might enter into the blood covenant with her husband on her wedding night, that severe penalties were associated with any man who would dare to violate a virgin. If a man forced a virgin to lie with him before she were betrothed, he was required to marry her and could never divorce her? Why? He had entered into a blood covenant with the virgin.

If a man violated a virgin who had been betrothed, the man was to be stoned to death. He had robbed another man of the opportunity to cut covenant with his own bride. From antiquity, the knowledge of the great evil of defiling a virgin and robbing her of the opportunity to cut covenant with her husband, was well known. The oldest book in the Bible is Job, and we read his confession in the following words.

Job 31:1

"I Have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

The writer of the book of Job uses the Hebrew word “bethulah,” meaning “virgin” to describe this covenant that Job made with his eyes. Job is not saying that he made a covenant to not look upon a woman with lust, although I am sure that he walked in integrity in this matter as well. What he specifically states is that he will not look upon a virgin with lust.

Job is testifying that he has covenanted to not commit great wickedness in the eyes of Yahweh. It would be a great wickedness for him to take a pure virgin to himself and to lie with her. Though many men with the wealth he had may consider doing such things, he would not violate a virgin in this way, destroying her one opportunity to cut covenant with a man. Although it was wrong for a man to commit any act of fornication, it was especially reprehensible to do so with a virgin. God would see, and He would judge.

I know that many who read these words have transgressed in this area. There are women who gave their virginity to one who was not their husband. They cut covenant with a man that they did not marry. They deprived their future husband of the opportunity to establish a blood covenant with themselves. Many men have taken away the virginity of a woman that they had no intention of marrying. These are great transgressions, destroying

the purity, innocence, and fidelity of what marriage was intended to be.

If reading this teaching causes a deep grieving in your spirit, then this writing is accomplishing one aim for which it is presented. It is the desire of this writer that the people of God would understand the holiness of the marriage covenant and that they would loathe all that would mar its sacredness.

But what then? Are those who sinned forever to suffer loss and regret for their transgressions? Is there no forgiveness, no recovery of that which was carelessly discarded? We should remember the words cited in the previous post.

A woman was brought before Christ who was caught in the very act of adultery. This woman was close to having been stoned to death. She heard the charges of the men who had caught her committing a great transgression. She knew what Moses had written concerning adultery. She stood condemned. She stood before the righteous judge of Israel, and He saw her filth and uncleanness.

Christ told the scribes and Pharisees, "Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone." There were no men present among those to whom Christ spoke who could cast a stone. They were all transgressors and stood condemned before Yahweh. Christ, however, was without sin. He could have hurled a stone at the adulteress had He chosen to do so. She was a sinner; He was not. She had violated Yahweh's holiness; He had fulfilled it.

Yet the only One who was able to execute the judgment of the Law said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." We all stand in need of the mercy of God. We would all do well to consider the peril that our transgressions have placed us in. We all stand within a hair's breath of the executioner, and we are guilty. Our only hope is that the Judge of all mankind might be merciful. We deserve the sentence of death, but He took the sentence upon Himself. He stood in our place and received the just condemnation for every woman who has cast away her virginity as if it was an unholy thing. Yahshua received the lashes and the cross for every man who has violated a virgin.

God has not changed the penalty of the Law. He merely changed who would pay the penalty. Let us weep and lament over the sins we have committed. Let us repent, and firmly commit ourselves to "Go and sin no more." Let us be grieved at those things we cast away and cannot get back. A woman cannot regain her physical virginity once it is gone, but she can become a virgin in her heart. Those who were once fornicators and adulterers can be cleansed and purified.

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And ***such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Yahshua Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.***

"You were washed." The stain of sin has been removed. Those who were unclean have been declared righteous through the blood of Christ.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but

according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...

“You were sanctified.” You have now been set aside to walk as one who is holy and righteous. Having been freed from sin you have been made a bondsman to righteousness.

Romans 6:22

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

“You were justified.” God has made a way that we might lawfully be declared righteous in His sight. He has placed our condemnation upon His Son and has placed His Son’s righteousness upon us. The great exchange has taken place.

II Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

What should be the result of this knowledge? Are we to continue in sin? God forbid. How can those who have been freed from sin at so high a cost continue any longer in it? Will we trample on the blood of Christ and act spitefully toward the Holy Spirit that has been given?

Hebrews 10:28-31

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant **by which he was sanctified**, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "**The Lord will judge HIS PEOPLE.**" It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This passage is speaking of those who have been sanctified, and who continue to transgress willfully. What can such ones expect? God will judge His people. If you have continued in the same transgressions that required Christ to go to the cross for you, have you not regarded as a common thing the precious blood of Christ? Have you not offended the Spirit of grace? Do you believe there will be no reaping of that which is sown to the flesh?

People of God, we have become accustomed to living carelessly, without any fear of God’s righteous judgment. We should fear greatly if we persist in sins that He has redeemed us from at the cost of the life of His beloved Son.

Perhaps you find yourself in this situation. Having been redeemed from a life of transgression and sin, you continued in it as one insensitive to the great cost of your salvation. Is there yet hope? Having acted with such carelessness and continued license, having trampled on all that is holy, can you yet be restored?

The apostle Paul wrote to the church of Corinth among which there were many who were continuing in sin. Some were sick as a result, and some had died. Some men were

visiting temple prostitutes. One man had even taken his father's wife to be his own. There was great transgression as many were partaking of the blood and body of Christ in an unworthy manner. (I am speaking here of the substance of what the bread and wine point to.)

Paul chastised them severely, and even declared that he had determined to turn the transgressor over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his soul might be saved in the day of Christ (I Corinthians 5:5). If you continue in sin, do you suppose that God will not turn you over to Satan for the destruction of your body? He surely will. Even now, many are sick, and some will die, because they have treated the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing.

Yet, a remarkable thing is observed in Paul's next epistle. The man who had taken his father's wife to be his own, bringing great shame to the name of Christ, had repented and put away his father's wife. There was yet room for repentance in the eyes of God. The man was restored to God and to fellowship with the body of Christ.

II Corinthians 2:6-10

Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ.

If you are experiencing conviction of your sin, then God's Spirit is yet striving with you, seeking to turn you to righteousness. There is yet room for repentance. If Yahweh had forsaken you due to continual transgression, then you would not be able to repent. He would give you over to your sin, and you would remain hardened until the stroke of judgment fell.

This is a serious matter. Do not delay to repent of your sins. Confess them to God and to those you have transgressed against. Fear God and pursue righteousness. If you shrug off the conviction, God will not strive with you forever. He will send upon you a spirit of delusion so that you will believe a lie and will be hardened until His judgment falls.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12

Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved... for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

I have strayed somewhat from the subject of betrothal, but the Spirit convinces me that I have not strayed from His message. Let us now return to our examination of betrothal.

According to the custom of the Jews, which is also the pattern demonstrated by Christ, a man would enter into a marriage agreement and would then depart to prepare a home in which to live with his bride. During this period following the betrothal much activity would be going on. As the Groom was preparing a Bridal chamber, his father was also making

plans for a wedding feast. The Bride too was busy. She was preparing herself to be taken into the Bridegroom's home to be his wife. We see all activities revealed in Christ's relationship to the church.

Christ, The Bridegroom, Preparing a Dwelling

John 14:2-4

"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

God the Father, Preparing a Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:2-3

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son."

The Ekklesia, the Bride, Making Herself Ready

Revelation 19:7-9

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'"

A typical betrothal period lasted approximately one year. The Bride, having been espoused, was to wait in readiness, for she would not know the exact time that her Bridegroom would come for her.

Matthew 25:1-6

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom... Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'"

Not even the Bridegroom knows the precise time when His Father will send Him to get His Bride. He waits in readiness, having prepared a dwelling place for His Bride.

Mark 13:32-33

"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is."

As the people of God, we have been espoused to Christ as a pure virgin. Christ has gone away to prepare a place to receive us unto Himself. The Father is preparing a great wedding feast to mark the day of our gathering to Christ to Tabernacle with Him

forevermore.

What will Christ be looking for when He returns? He will be looking for those who have made themselves ready. Many in the church have failed to do so. They are not clothing themselves in white linen, which is the righteous acts of the saints. They are continuing in unrighteous acts. Many are involved in sexual immorality. Some are fornicating and committing adultery. Some are divorcing and remarrying according to their own soul's desire. Many are harlots in their affections, loving the world and the things in it. The majority of the church today are unclean. They have not washed their garments and made themselves ready to meet the Bridegroom. What will happen to them at His appearing?

Yahshua spoke of this matter in the parable of the ten virgins. The ten virgins are not the bride. They are attendants of the Bride. The Bride is depicted as alert and watchful.

I Thessalonians 5:4-7

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

Revelation 16:15

"Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame."

The one who stays awake is the Bride. In the parable of the ten virgins, all ten had fallen asleep when the Bridegroom delayed. None of these were the Bride of Christ. It is common to find the people of God divided into three groups. There is always the overcomers. There are those who have some fruit, but not unto perfection. And there are the disobedient servants who bring forth no increase for the Kingdom of God. We see these three groups in the following:

Three Sections of the Tabernacle and Temple (which the people of God are)

- The Holy of Holies (the inner chamber of the Bride)
- The Holy Place
- The Outer Court

The Three Main Feasts. Each was associated with a harvest, which is symbolic of resurrection - the ingathering of men from the earth.

- Passover (those who are passed over by the second death - The overcomers - the Bride - Revelation 2:11)
- Pentecost
- Tabernacles

The Disciples of Christ

- The Beloved Disciple who leaned upon Christ's breast (the Bride)
- The Three
- The Twelve

Many more examples of this three-fold division of God's people could be given, such

as those who bring forth some an hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty; the three servants given talents who are called to give an account of their stewardship; and of course:

- The Bride
- The five wise virgins (who awoke at the last moment and had oil)
- The five foolish virgins (who awoke at the last moment and had no oil)

What does the oil represent? It is the righteous acts of the saints. The oil in the lamps was for the purpose of giving light. The wise virgins rose and trimmed their lamps, showing that they had some good works at the end, but the foolish had no oil in their lamps and could not be seen as lights in the darkness. The Bride did not let her lamp go out, neither did she sleep.

What is the character of your life at this time? Is your life a manifestation of the righteous acts of the saints? Or have you taken that which has been entrusted to you (the Holy Spirit) and buried it in the earth (of your flesh) to be given back to Christ at His appearing? Are you asleep in the light, performing works of darkness, even despising the holiness of the marriage covenant? Are you fornicating, or divorcing and remarrying to satisfy your own soul?

Remember that God equates idolatry with adultery. Christ will not return to take an adulteress into His bridal chamber. Such ones will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Christ is coming back for a pure virgin, one who has been cleansed of her adulteries, and is waiting with patience and chastity for His appearing.

What then is idolatry today? We must know if we are to identify those who are engaged in spiritual adultery.

Colossians 3:5-7

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, **which amounts to idolatry**. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

All of the things in this list “amount to idolatry.” This is revealed in that the apostle says “in **THEM** you also once walked.” We once walked as idolaters, but must do so no more. You are not walking as a chaste virgin if you are engaging in these things. The Amplified Bible renders this Scripture in the following manner:

Colossians 3:5

So kill (deaden, deprive of power) the evil desire lurking in your members [those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin]: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry (the deifying of self and other created things instead of God).

While the Church’s Bridegroom is off preparing a dwelling place, and while the Father is preparing the wedding place, what is the Bride doing? Are you making yourself ready? Will you be adorned with linen, clean and white, at His appearing.

Let all who have this hope of being included in the Bride of Christ, purify themselves

as He is pure.



Foundation Stone Seven - Glorious Union

What if it were the Father's plan to so fill mankind with His own holy, omnipotent and omniscient presence that it became impossible to tell where He ended and where we began? Suppose that in a moment of time we became so infused with the divine life that it was like a high voltage electric current filled us with the same power that fuels a trillion stars. Try to envision for a moment that the vitality you now experience as the life of God glows within you was suddenly fanned into the brilliance of a million suns shining in their strength. Imagine suddenly, in an instant, having your mental capacity expanded to understand all mysteries and to contain all knowledge in such a way that even Solomon's experience would be eclipsed as but the smallest foreshadowing of things to come.

Such an experience is not hyperbole, nor vain imagination. In truth, these words do not come near describing that which the Father has planned for His sons and daughters. Consider the following testimony of Scriptures.

I John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when [Christ] appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren...

I Corinthians 15:49

And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Philippians 3:20-21

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Yahshua Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory...

From the very beginning of creation Yahweh set a plan in motion to create beings after His image, and in His likeness. It was four thousand years before the first man appeared who would fulfill this prophetic declaration of the Father. The first Adam could not say, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." It was not until Christ walked this earth that a man appeared who could make this statement.

Yet the glory of Christ while He was on this earth was veiled. There were moments when it was glimpsed, as was revealed on the mount of transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1-2

And six days later Yahshua took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Christ walked in the power of God, but it too was hidden under the appearance of earthly flesh, waiting to break out to the astonishment of those around.

Luke 7:12-16

Now as He approached the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And Yahshua gave him back to his mother. And fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

What astonishment must have gripped this people. The Scriptures describe their reaction as fear. How could such a thing be comprehended? One who appears as an ordinary, impotent man, suddenly manifests the power of resurrection life. How can a man speak a word and the dead be raised? The people said truly, "God has visited His people."

Even though the power Christ manifested caused great fear among the people, it was merely a token of the power at His command. There was a far greater glory and power that belonged to Him. For a season He laid it aside, but when He departed this world at His ascension to the heavens He took it up again.

Philippians 2:5-11

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Yahshua, who, although **He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men**. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Yahshua every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Yahshua Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

The apostle John walked with the Son of God when Yahshua bore the image of man. John loved Christ, being the most intimate with him, yet He never imagined the greatness of the glory that once belonged to his beloved Master, and which would be His again.

While exiled on the isle of Patmos John had a revelation of the resurrected Christ. He describes Him as follows:

Revelation 1:12-17

And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been

caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man.

The revelation of the glorified Christ was so great that all strength left John's body. He was overcome by the magnificence of Christ's appearing. John fell down as if dead, his sinful flesh being unable to arise in the presence of such holiness, power, and glory.

Yet, the awesome truth, incredible in its comprehension, is that this same glorious appearance is to be shared with the victorious saints of God. This is what John wrote in his first epistle. "We shall be like Him!" This is what Paul testifies in the following words:

Romans 8:18-19

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Paul writes also of the **power** we are to experience in the coming ages. Paul walked in moments of great power, where astounding works were performed by his hands, as testified in the book of Acts.

Acts 19:11-12

And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

The apostle knew that, as awesome as such experiences were, they were only a foretaste of the powers to be experienced by the saints in the coming ages.

Hebrews 6:4-5

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, **and have tasted** the good word of God and **the powers of the age to come...**

Peter also wrote of that glory which is to come.

I Peter 4:13

To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also **at the revelation of His glory**, you may rejoice with exultation.

And Paul again writes of this glory of Christ that the saints are to share.

II Corinthians 4:17

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison...

Colossians 3:4

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

People of God, being revealed with Christ “in glory” is not a location, it is an experience. It is the fulfillment of that which Christ prayed in His high priestly prayer recorded by John.

John 17:22

"And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them..."

In a single moment of time mankind will be transformed, but each in his own order. The first to experience this glorious conformity to Christ will be the overcomers. Isaiah prophesies of the glory of God arising upon His people.

Isaiah 60:1-3

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but Yahweh will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

Who can comprehend what this experience will be like? Yet a greater marvel is revealed in how it will come about.

Some have imagined that they will simply receive an enduement of power, that their old body will be replaced with a new incorruptible body, an immortal tabernacle not made with hands. These things are true, but there is something far greater to occur. The transformation will come about through the process of entering into a fullness of union with Christ.

John 17:20-22

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one...**

Right now we have been given a measure of the Spirit of Christ, but we are to receive the Spirit beyond measure.

Ephesians 1:13-14

You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

When a man gives a woman an engagement ring, he is setting his seal upon her. He is giving her a token of some value as a pledge of greater things to come. Though they are

engaged, the hour is to arrive when the man will give himself fully to the woman. The two will become one flesh. The members of his body will become her members, and vice versa. Everything he possesses will belong to the woman.

(This reveals the error of those men and women who enter into pre-nuptial agreements. They are refusing to give themselves fully and without any reservations to the one to whom they are entering into a marriage covenant.)

Christ has given His betrothed a pledge in the form of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This present limited experience of the Spirit, as precious as it is, will one day give way to the glorious fullness of union with Christ. The Spirit will be given without measure.

If we would understand the holiness of sexual intercourse, we must perceive how God has designed the physical union of the man and the woman to serve as a parable of the spiritual union between Christ and His people. Repeatedly, the Scriptures reveal that these two forms of union are given as types and shadows of one another.

I Corinthians 6:16-17

Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Ephesians 5:31-32

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Every detail of the physical union of the man and woman is given as a parable of the spiritual union that is to be experienced by the Bride of Christ. God designed the physical union so that it is accompanied by tremendous physical sensations of pleasure and joy. This is a foreshadowing of that glorious spiritual union to be experienced in Christ.

Psalms 16:11

In Your presence is fulness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

In the act of sexual union the man and woman are brought face to face. The King James Bible often speaks of sexual union as "the man KNEW his wife." We see the same language employed when describing the fullness of spiritual union that is yet to appear between Christ and His church.

I Corinthians 13:12-13

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then **face to face**; now **I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.**

In the act of physical intercourse the man enters the woman. This is with purpose and design, for Christ is to enter His people and fill them. The result will be a rapturous bliss of which the physical union provides only a small foretaste. Paul never writes with such rapture and prophetic joy as he does when he describes the glorious union of Christ and His church.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; ***so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith***; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and ***to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.***

Undoubtedly, some will take offense at comparing the physical union of the man and woman to the spiritual union of Christ and His people. Yet, Yahweh clearly intended one to stand as a symbol and revelation of the other. Our problem is that we live in a perverse society that has transformed that which was designed to be holy into a promiscuous, adulterous, fornicating, cesspool of indecency.

I would raise the vision of the people of God to see the holiness with which Yahweh has adorned the physical union of a man and his wife. Can anything be more righteous than the spiritual union of Christ and His people? Should we not then guard with jealousy that physical union that is given as a type and shadow of that which is most holy?

The apostle Paul declares that the man and woman become “one flesh,” but the one joined to Christ becomes “one spirit with Him.” I urge you to reflect upon this for a moment.

Consider that the day will come when Christ will approach His bride. He will say, “The time has come for us to become fully one in spirit. Before I have given you a pledge of this union. Now I will give Myself fully to you. All you must do is receive.” In doing so, everything that pertains to Christ will enter into His people. His omnipotent power; His omniscient mind; His fathomless glory; His indestructible life; all that He possesses will in a moment be infused into His people. The experience will be indescribable joy.

The apostle Paul declares, “We shall know fully, even as we have been fully known.” There will be no more veil. Is this not the message of the virgin’s veil. She has seen things as through a veil, but the veil will be removed. The veil is symbolically removed by the Bridegroom during the wedding ceremony. It is removed in substance when the hymen is torn and the man enters into his virgin bride. We too will have the veil that has covered our eyes removed when we experience a complete spiritual union with Christ. We will see as He sees. We will know as He knows. We will be one.

Can you not sense the deficiency of your current union with Christ? We struggle to know His thoughts. We see through a veil darkly. We wrestle with perplexity and confusion. We desire to have power to open blind eyes and unstop deaf ears. We yearn to raise those who are spiritually dead. We experience that which Paul described in the following words:

Romans 8:22-23

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

We presently have “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” We do not have the fulness of the

harvest. We have the pledge of that which is to come, but we have yet to enter into its abundance.

This precious pledge we have received is further constrained by this sinful flesh. Oh, to be delivered from this body of death. We are like a chick struggling to emerge from the shell. We are like the newly formed butterfly seeking to break free of the cocoon. We can taste the things to come, and we yearn to enter into the fulness, but the struggle continues. We are not yet free.

An hour is coming when Christ will complete the work He has begun. At His next appearing He will finish the salvation He started. He will deliver His overcomers from all that is hindering them and holding them back.

Hebrews 9:28

Even so it is that Christ, having been offered to take upon Himself and bear as a burden the sins of many once and once for all, will appear a second time, not to carry any burden of sin nor to deal with sin, but to bring **to full salvation** those who are [eagerly, constantly, and patiently] waiting for and expecting Him.
[Amplified Bible]

This will be the moment of our ecstatic and glorious union. It is no wonder that those who stand with Christ on Mount Zion will sing a new song (Revelation 14:3). The praise will not be able to be contained. The glories of the Son of God, revealed IN HIS PEOPLE must be given voice.

Let us now make this very practical. This teaching series is presented to promote understanding of God's mind as it pertains to sexual purity, the marital union, divorce and remarriage.

Seeing that we have been betrothed to Christ, and have received His pledge, should we not be looking forward with great anticipation to that full spiritual union that lies ahead? We should be like a virgin betrothed, waiting expectantly for the appearing of her bridegroom.

Will the one who has been sealed with the Holy Spirit and who is promised to freely receive everything that belongs to Christ, then pursue other lovers while they await the return of the Bridegroom? Can we not all put aside the pursuit of all that competes for our affection for this brief season of our lives? Can we not hold in our hearts a passion and desire for Christ, during this season in which He has gone away to prepare a habitation for us in which we might dwell together as one? It is this fervent love and longing for Christ that Yahshua speaks of to the church of Ephesus.

Revelation 2:4

"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

Will not Christ reject all those who have been betrothed to Him as a pure virgin, when He discovers their lack of chastity? The wait for His appearing may be long; the days may seem wearisome, and the trials unending; yet, should not the delay make the anticipation of His appearing all the more precious in our sight?

We must guard against weariness. Let us stir ourselves up by reminding ourselves of that glorious union that has been promised to all who look with longing to His appearing.

People of God, if we are espoused to Christ, we must live in expectancy of His return

for His Bride. What would a man think of his virgin to whom he has given his pledge, if in his departure she began acting promiscuously, giving herself to many other lovers, unwilling to wait for the moment of pleasure when her Bridegroom should appear? Would not that man be righteously indignant? Would he not give to her a writing of divorce and declare to her, "Depart from Me, I never knew you." Truly, she will not be known to Him, nor He to her, for she played the harlot.

Many in the church today are living in an unchaste manner. They say they belong to Christ. They may even make a spectacle of showing off the evidence of their betrothal by flashing around the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but their hearts are lusting after many other things. They love the world and the things in it. Such ones may expect that Christ will sweep them off their feet and carry them away to heaven, but they are deceived. Their portion will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. They will be assigned a portion with the unbelievers. The door will be shut before them, and they will be unable to enter into the marriage feast. They will not know the full and glorious union of the Son of God that could have been their portion.

This spiritual adultery is paralleled in the physical lives of God's people. The church today is rife with fornication, with adultery, with divorce and remarriage. Multitudes are acting out physically the condition of the church spiritually. They are unchaste.

God intended the marriage union to symbolize the union of Christ and His Bride. How many have turned that symbol of holiness into something unholy?

If you have sinned in this matter, do not hesitate to repent before God. Seek Him with the deepest fear and humility lest you discover at His appearing that He has not come for you.

There is a promised holy and glorious union that will be consummated at the next appearance of Christ. Let the Bride make herself ready. Do not delay, Soon a voice will be heard from the heavenly realms.

Revelation 21:3-4

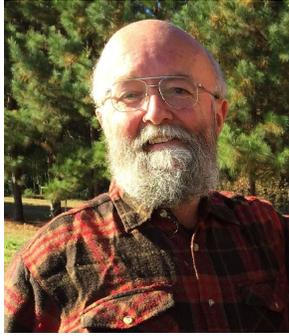
And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ***"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."***

A glorious union is set before those who have made themselves ready. John sums up the matter well:

I John 3:3

And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.





Books By Joseph Herrin

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Sabbath

Sarah's Children

The Road from Babylon to Zion

Laying Down the Law

God's Plan of the Ages

The Divine Quest - God's passionate pursuit of faith in the heart of man.

The Mark of the Beast

Evidence of Things Unseen

Overcoming Addiction by the Spirit of Christ

Christ in You - The Hope of Glory

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Dragon Flood

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Living Epistles - Testimonies of Faith

Attractive Deception - The False Hope of the Hebrew Roots Movement