

Chapter One:

God as Male and Female

Men and women are not only different but incomplete in themselves. They need each other in order to know the mind of God. It has been this way ever since God separated Adam and Eve into two individuals. Why did God separate them? Would it not have been more advantageous to leave male and female together and thus have both perspectives in every person? To answer this question is to discover some fundamental principles of marriage as God sees it.

The Names of God

Most people who study the “name” of God focus on the name YHWH (Yahweh) and its various sub-categories, such as Yahweh-Nissi (Banner) or Yahweh-Rapha (Healer). It is not our purpose here to study each of these revelations of the character of Yahweh, but rather to compare the name of Yahweh with the name of El Shaddai. God spoke to Moses in Exodus 6:2, 3 and explained to him these two names,

² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord [literally, “Yahweh”]; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty [literally, “El Shaddai”], but by My name, Lord [Yahweh] I did not make Myself known to them.

This is a most important revelation of truth. The name of Yahweh was revealed first to Moses many centuries after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since Moses was the writer of the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), we see that he often inserted the name of Yahweh throughout the book of Genesis. Yet this was not to imply that the name of Yahweh had been revealed in those days, but rather to show that Yahweh was *active* during that time. The first occurrence of the name of Yahweh appears in Gen. 2:4,

⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God [Yahweh Elohim] made earth and heaven.

Hence, we know that Yahweh was the Creator of heaven and earth, even though He did not reveal Himself by this name for the first 2,500 years of Adamic history. Then in Gen. 17:1 we find a very unique verse,

¹ Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord [Yahweh] appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; Walk before Me and be blameless.

Note that *Yahweh* told Abram, “*I am El Shaddai.*” This tells us that El Shaddai is also Yahweh. They are the same God, but God uses both names, depending upon the occasion. Let no one think that there are two Gods. There is only one God, but He uses more than one name and has more than one manifestation.

El Shaddai is the name God uses to manifest the divine character of motherhood. The Hebrew word *shad* means “the breast of a woman or animal,” according to Strong’s Concordance, word #7699. Thus, the name shows the feminine, or mothering, side of God’s character.

The Hebrew word *El* is usually translated “God,” but more literally, the word refers to one who is in power over others. For example, God told Moses in Ex. 7:1, “*See, I make you as God to Pharaoh.*” This simply means that God had given Moses spiritual authority over Pharaoh. Pharaoh was, in effect, the servant or subject of Moses, though Pharaoh would not have admitted

this. In its plural form, *Elohim*, the word is sometimes used of the judges in Israel. (See Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9.)

So *El*, or *Elohim*, refers to one who is in power, or “almighty.” The name of El Shaddai, then, presents God as the Almighty Breasted One, the God who gave birth to creation and the nourisher and protector of her children, particularly during their youth. Therefore, this is the name by which God was revealed in the early days of man’s history—when man was yet “young.”

After about 2,500 years, however, God called Moses and revealed Himself under a new name, Yahweh. God had “changed hats,” so to speak. He was now revealing Himself as Father, rather than as Mother, because this “child” had grown to the place where he needed the firm hand of discipline from his Father. And so we find that Yahweh is the Lawgiver. Paul tells us in Gal. 3:24,

²⁴ Therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

The purpose of the divine law is a tutor to teach us the difference between right and wrong, between sin and righteous behavior. Without discipline, a child will be handicapped in his character and will never learn to respect the rights and property of other people. A parent spends much time acting as a judge to referee the countless disputes between their children. Each time a parent renders a verdict, the child is shown the meaning of the law’s justice, by which that child will know how to treat his fellow man for the rest of his life.

This is the purpose of the law as manifested in a family with children. The purpose of discipline is not to punish, but to teach by correction, so that the child may grow into maturity. Even so, God gave His law in order to bring us to the maturity of Christ. It was given “to lead us to Christ,” not only to come to Jesus as a Person, but to grow up into the image of Christ. After all, the character of Christ defines spiritual maturity. Our level of spiritual maturity is measured by how well we manifest the character of Jesus Christ.

These two names, El Shaddai and Yahweh, reveal to us that God is both our Mother and our Father. One God is both Mother and Father to us. He is complete and self-sufficient, needing no other god, male or female, to meet His needs. One might say that, like man, God has two sides to His brain—male and female. It is one brain in two halves.

God Created Man in His Image

Gen. 1:27 says,

²⁷ And God created man [awdawm] in His own image; in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them.

We see here that when man was created in the image of God, he was both male and female. This is because God is both male and female. Later, in Gen. 2:21-23, we read how God removed the female out of the man and separated them into two individuals,

²¹ So the Lord God [Yahweh Elohim] caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² And the Lord God [Yahweh Elohim] fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

Once the male and female were separated and placed in distinct bodies, they were dependent upon each other for their completeness. That is the foundational truth behind the institution of marriage. And so the Scripture continues in verse 24,

²⁴ For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

The concept of becoming “one flesh” is unity in body, soul, and spirit. Many people know how to become one in body. Fewer know how to unite in soul (mind, will, and emotions). Only a small fraction of mankind has experienced unity of spirit. Unity of spirit is not merely agreeing upon a set of religious doctrines. No, that has more to do with unity of the soul (mind), because it deals with various opinions and beliefs in our minds. Unity of spirit is much more subtle and will be explained as we proceed in our study.

The Double Witness Law

When God gave the law to Moses, He revealed a very fundamental law in Deut. 19:15,

¹⁵ A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity, or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

The Apostle Paul appealed to this law also in 2 Cor. 13:1,

¹ This is the third time I am coming to you. Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Again, Paul writes in 1 Tim. 5:19,

¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

All truth is legally established on the testimony of at least two witnesses. To be a witness, one must either *hear* or *see* something.

When dealing with divine revelation, there are many who claim to have heard the word of the Lord, and they prophesy accordingly. Perhaps they have truly heard from God; perhaps they have not. How does one really know? On an individual level, each person ought to take the prophecy to God and ask Him for confirmation. If the Lord confirms it, then it is truth to that person.

In a family, there are many decisions that are made every day. A child may say, “The Lord told me to go to the store and buy some candy.” Such a revelation may or may not be of the Lord. The parent is the one called to be the double witness. If the parent does not bear witness to the child’s revelation, then the word is not established as truth.

In parental decisions (those that affect the family in general), the husband and wife are called as the two witnesses to establish the truth of revelation. It is this arena that concerns us in our present study.

Determining God’s Will in a Family

God separated male from female in order to provide a double witness in the family unit that would establish all truth as revealed by God. This is one of the most important principles that a husband and wife must know fully in order to establish the kind of marriage that God intended from the beginning.

When man was originally created with male and female in a single individual, the man was in God’s image, having both a left and a right brain. He could discern and hear the voice of both El Shaddai and Yahweh speaking to him. But when God separated Eve from Adam, they became incomplete within themselves. Adam’s male nature was naturally tuned to hear the voice of Yahweh; Eve’s female nature was naturally tuned to hear the voice of El Shaddai. We do not know how pronounced this deficiency was in that first couple, but we know by experience today

that most men tend to be more developed in the left side of their brain, while most women tend to be more developed in the right side of their brain.

The left brain gives us a logical and mechanical ability. The right brain gives us an artistic and intuitive ability. Thus, men and women view life from different perspectives and react differently in viewing and solving life's problems. When confronted with identical situations, men tend to ask for logical reasons to understand it, while women tend to see and understand its emotional impact. In order to understand the entire situation and resolve it fully, one must understand both sides. The difference between men and women is far more than just physical.

One of the purposes in marriage is for each to assist the other to better see the other side of reality. For instance, if God speaks to them and leads them to move to another city, the husband will tend to wonder how this will affect his job and his ability to support his family. The woman will wonder how it will affect the family and the disruptions inherent in moving the "nest." Even if the woman herself has a career, she cannot help but view such a move more emotionally and intuitively than an average man would view it.

In order to determine the will of God, it requires the viewpoint of both the husband and wife. Each one's input will help the other to comprehend the full situation with more clarity. Therefore, both husband and wife must have the ability to hear God's voice, or else they will experience a breakdown in knowing the will of God for their lives. The ability to hear God is a skill that is learned and developed over time, particularly as we learn to overthrow the idols of the heart that distort the voice of God and cause us to misunderstand or misapply it. This is the subject of our book, Hearing God's Voice.

If both the husband and the wife have developed the ability to hear God's voice, and if both truly want to know God's will alone without the disadvantage of heart idolatry to lead them astray, then such a marriage has the potential of always knowing the will of God for the family. Husband and wife then can assume the role of two witnesses, one hearing from Yahweh and the other hearing from El Shaddai. Together they can receive the full divine perspective from both sides of God's mind and act accordingly.

This is the basis for the ideal marriage. No one has this type of relationship automatically. It usually takes a long time to develop. Unfortunately, most people know little or nothing about it, and without some example to observe, they spend most of their life fumbling in the dark, trying to learn by trial and error. But without instruction, the learning curve is too gradual, and most come to the end of their lives never having attained the satisfaction of developing this relationship.

Those who are unmarried, of course, obviously must find someone else as a prayer partner for confirmation. For those who have no close friends that can hear from God, they must look to the pastor of the local fellowship. If there is none, or if the pastor has little ability to hear God's voice, then perhaps all one can do is pray that God will provide the double witness Himself in some way. God does often show us signs, if we have eyes to see them. This involves learning divine "sign" language.

The purpose of this book is to lay some foundational teaching and guidance that we believe will be helpful in hearing God's voice, particularly in a family context.

Chapter Two: Hagar and Judaism

The Scriptures teach us of two types of marriage covenants. They are pictured in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant was mediated by Moses; the New Covenant was mediated by Jesus Christ. The Old Covenant was a marriage of a bondwoman; the New Covenant was a marriage of a freewoman. Paul tells us in Gal. 4:22-26 that it was pictured allegorically by Abraham's marriage with Hagar and Sarah:

²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the freewoman. ²³ But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the freewoman through the promise. ²⁴ This is allegorically speaking; for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. ²⁵ Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

The divine law in Ex. 21:1-9 recognized two kinds of marriage covenants. If a man gave a bondwoman (slave) to his son as his wife, she did not enjoy all the rights that she would have had if she had been a freewoman. This did not mean that she was devoid of rights, for in biblical law, even slaves had rights to fair and equitable treatment. But yet a bond-wife had no right to be involved in the decision-making process of the family. She was, after all, just a slave woman.

Hagar: The Old Marriage Covenant

The Old Covenant was a marriage between God and Israel. In effect, God was marrying a slave-woman named Israel. She had the same relationship to her Husband (God) as Hagar had to Abram. And the "children" of that marital relationship could never produce the promise of God. Even as Hagar could only bring forth Ishmael, so also could that Old Covenant only bring forth spiritual Ishmaelites. This is the inherent nature of the old city of Jerusalem.

Paul tells us later in Galatians 4 that the children of the old Jerusalem persecuted the children of the promise—that is, the Christian believers. Paul knew of this first-hand, because he himself, as a child of the old Jerusalem, when he was still known by his Hebrew name, Saul, had led the persecution of the early Church (Acts 9:1, 2). In doing this, he was fulfilling the type and shadow of Ishmael's persecution of Isaac. Gen. 21:9 is the only biblical reference about Ishmael persecuting Isaac. It says only that Ishmael was "mocking" Isaac. This is hardly enough to justify Paul's statement that Ishmael *persecuted* Isaac. However, in other ancient writings such as the book of Jasher, we find that Ishmael actually attempted to kill Isaac. Jasher 21:11-15 reads,

¹¹ And Ishmael the son of Abraham was grown up in those days; he was fourteen years old when Sarah bare Isaac to Abraham. ¹² And God was with Ishmael the son of Abraham, and he grew up, and he learned to use the bow and became an archer. ¹³ And when Isaac was five years old he was sitting with Ishmael at the door of the tent. ¹⁴ And Ishmael came to Isaac and seated himself opposite to him, and he took the bow and drew it and put the arrow in it, and intended to slay Isaac. ¹⁵ And Sarah saw the act which Ishmael desired to do to her son Isaac, and it grieved her exceedingly on account of her

son, and she sent for Abraham, and said to him, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for her son shall not be heir with my son, for thus did he seek to do unto him this day.

This account coincides with Paul's statement and fits perfectly with the actual persecution of the early Church. Remember, as a spiritual Ishmaelite, Saul had attempted to kill the Christians and had also participated in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1). Paul later regretted his actions, of course, for he testifies in Gal. 1:13, 14,

¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

Judaism itself is a product of the old Jerusalem and the Old Covenant. *It is Hagar* and can never bring forth the Kingdom of God, regardless of what many teach today. Judaism will only put people into bondage, for that is its very nature. There are, of course, many outside influences that affect individual Jews, and so one should not lump everyone into a single basket. In fact, it is said that in a discussion between two Jews there are three opinions.

Hagar's Bondage Manifested in Judaism

Most Christians today think of Hagar and Ishmael only in terms of the Arabs and Islam. In regard to the treatment of women, one of the reasons given for America's war in Afghanistan in 2002 was to "liberate women." Hence, America now believes Arab women to be in bondage, and certainly this is so by today's Western standards.

But Paul showed clearly in Galatians 4 that Jerusalem is Hagar, and its offspring (Judaism) is Ishmael. So in order to understand this Scripture, we will need to focus more on Judaism than upon Islam. If Paul is correct, then there should be evidence even today that Judaism leads people into bondage. And, in fact, we find this to be so in their traditions called the Talmud.

The authority we will use in our study of the teachings of Judaism is Dr. Israel Shahak, emeritus professor of organic chemistry at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He was courageous enough to write books that offered an honest critique of Judaism in order to affect changes in their blatant chauvinism. He says in his 1994 book, Jewish History, Jewish Religion, page 36, that Judaism is not based upon the Bible in the same way as the various Protestant religions. It is based upon the Talmud, which is what men *say* the Bible truly means, even if the interpretation tortures the text.

"There is yet another misconception about Judaism which is particularly common among Christians, or people heavily influenced by Christian tradition and culture. This is the misleading idea that Judaism is a 'biblical religion'; that the Old Testament has in Judaism the same central place and legal authority which the Bible has for Protestant or even Catholic Christianity."

So as we take a brief look at some of the teachings of Judaism, let us keep in mind that this is what Jesus called "*the traditions of men.*" This is what made void the law of God (Matt. 15:1-9). This is not Old Testament religion, for it does not reflect the heart and mind of God. It will quickly become apparent why Jesus opposed the teachings of the religious leaders of His day and why true Christianity is not simply another sect of Judaism.

Attitudes on Slavery

Judaism tends to produce people who think they have a divine right to rule others as their slaves. In a Jewish Kingdom of God, one Talmudic writer envisions that every Jew will have 2,500 slaves. In *The Book of Education*, written by a rabbi in 14th century Spain, a book that is

very influential even today, he explains the 613 religious obligations of Judaism. Dr. Israel Shahak says in Jewish History, page 95,

“In 322, dealing with the duty to keep a Gentile slave enslaved for ever (whereas a Jewish slave must be set free after seven years) the following explanation is given:

“And at the root of this religious obligation [is the fact that] the Jewish people are the best of the human species, created to know their Creator and worship Him, and worthy of having slaves to serve them.”

This Jewish attitude is consistent with what Orthodox Judaism teaches regarding all non-Jews. Dr. Shahak tells us on page 88 of Jewish History, “*all Gentile women are presumed to be prostitutes.*” Again, he says on the same page, “*Gentiles are presumed to be congenital liars, and are disqualified from testifying in a rabbinical court.*” On page 96 he says,

“Anyone who lives in Israel knows how deep and widespread these attitudes of hatred and cruelty towards all Gentiles are among the majority of Israeli Jews.”

Orthodox Judaism’s political attitude toward non-Jews is that they must be enslaved by Jews, for that is their only real purpose in being created. This attitude despising non-Jews and even hating them is instilled in religious Jews at an early age, and it becomes the justification for their goal of enslaving them. If the Kingdom of God were to be established on earth according to the Jewish model, we would soon see a Jewish totalitarian elite ruling over all non-Jews. As Dr. Shahak says on his Jewish History, page 103, “*It should be recalled that Judaism, especially in its classical form, is totalitarian in nature.*”

The “Satanic Souls” of All Non-Jews

The doctrinal basis of this belief is that the souls of non-Jews are on the level of beasts or are satanic. Dr. Shahak says on page 27 of Jewish History,

“As an example, let us take the famous Hatanya, fundamental book of the Habbad movement, one of the most important branches of Hassidism. According to this book, all non-Jews are totally satanic creatures ‘in whom there is absolutely nothing good’. Even a non-Jewish embryo is qualitatively different from a Jewish one. The very existence of a non-Jew is ‘inessential’, whereas all of creation was created solely for the sake of the Jews.”

This book is widely circulated in the Lubavitcher movement founded by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson of New York City. He died in 1994, and so the movement is now led by Rabbi Schneersohn. In Dr. Israel Shahak’s 1999 book, Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel, page 60 includes some of the teachings of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, who taught,

“Two contrary types of soul exist, a non-Jewish soul comes from three satanic spheres, while the Jewish soul stems from holiness.

“As has been explained, an embryo is called a human being, because it has both a body and soul. Thus, the difference between a Jewish and a non-Jewish embryo can be understood. There is also a difference in bodies. The body of a Jewish embryo is on a higher level than is the body of a non-Jew. . . . The same difference exists in regard to the soul: the soul of a Jewish embryo is different than [sic] the soul of a non-Jewish embryo. . . . A Jew was not created as a means for some [other] purpose; he himself is the purpose, since the substance of all [divine] emanations was created only to serve the Jews. ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ [Genesis 1:1] means that [the heavens and the earth] were created for the sake of the Jews, who are called the ‘beginning’.”

Rabbi Schneerson's Lubovitcher sect has influenced millions of Jews today. He died June 12, 1994 at the age of 92. His chauvinistic teaching did not die with him, for it was taught in most Jewish sects long before he was born and has continued after his death as well. He was only one of many who have taught these things in Jewish circles. Even so, let us make it clear that many Jews today totally reject such self-serving racism, but in doing so, they move away from historic Judaism itself as taught in their traditions, the Talmud.

Sanctified Robbery

The more zealous and religious they are, it seems the more convinced they are that they are better than all other people and have the right to enslave and mistreat others. *Shulhan Aruch*, composed in the 16th century by Rabbi Yosef Karo, was written for the advanced scholar in Judaism and is often quoted. It says,

“All property of other nations belongs to the Jewish nation, which consequently is entitled to seize upon it without any scruples. An Orthodox Jew is not bound to observe principles of morality towards people of other tribes. He may act contrary to morality, if profitable to himself or to Jews in general.”

Dr. Israel Shahak comments on this principle of sanctified robbery in his book, Jewish History, page 90, where he writes,

“Robbery (with violence) is strictly forbidden if the victim is Jewish. However, robbery of a Gentile by a Jew is not forbidden outright, but only under certain circumstances such as ‘when the Gentiles are not under our rule’, but is permitted ‘when they are under our rule’. Rabbinical authorities differ among themselves as to the precise details of the circumstances under which a Jew may rob a Gentile, but the whole debate is concerned only with the relative power of Jews and Gentiles, rather than with universal considerations of justice and humanity. This may explain why so very few rabbis have protested against the robbery of Palestinian property in Israel: it was backed by overwhelming Jewish power.”

The Palestinians see this attitude first hand today as manifested in the Israeli Likud Party (the party of Begin, Shamir, Netanyahu, and Sharon), and they object to the theft of their property. (See The Struggle for the Birthright, chapters 13 and 14.) Many Christians need to re-evaluate their position and ask themselves if they would rather support such basic injustice or take a stand for the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles.

Dr. Shahak also explains the teachings of the Halakhah, the legal system of classic Judaism, in regard to interest on money, lost property, deception in business, and fraud. He explains that it is “*mandatory to exact as much interest as possible on a loan to a Gentile*” (p. 89). Likewise, he shows that it is actually *forbidden* that a Jew return lost property to a Gentile. Regarding deception in business, he writes on page 89,

“It is a grave sin to practice any kind of deception whatsoever against a Jew. Against a Gentile it is only forbidden to practice direct deception. Indirect deception is allowed, unless it is likely to cause hostility towards Jews or insult to the Jewish religion.”

In today's age of communication, they should understand that sooner or later, their religious practices will become known to all, and then people will react according to their own religious convictions. This has already been done many times in the past, and this is probably the main reason why Jews have undergone persecution over the years. There were always those who hated Jews just because they were Jews; but it is equally true that Jews are often taught to hate and to defraud Gentiles just because they are not Jews and therefore have “satanic souls.”

It is important to understand the Talmudic attitude toward all non-Jews that is taught and believed by Jewish rabbis today, for this lays the foundation and context in regard to their attitude toward women. Talmudic teaching in regard to women is the most relevant subject of our present study of Old and New Covenant marriages. So let us see what many powerful sects in Judaism teach about women.

Jewish Attitudes about Women

Jewish women have long felt the sting of disdain and some very real oppression by their male counterparts. Perhaps this is why so many Jewish women in America such as Betty Friedan have become feminists. She co-founded the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966. The fact is, many women really do need liberation, but if they are not Christians, they will inevitably try to achieve it through carnal means. Women often are discontented with the role of a Hagar, but the way to the Sarah relationship is not to be found outside of a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. It is sad that the men did not set them free and that women had to do it themselves. Dr. Israel Shahak writes in Jewish Fundamentalism, page 24,

“Historically, Jewish schooling began with the heder for Jewish male children aged three or four. (The heder, a word meaning ‘room’ in Hebrew, was the name of the traditional elementary school as it existed from Talmudic times in the earliest centuries of the Common Era until the formation of the first modern nation-states at which time many Jews strove to modify or abolish the heder.) The heder was previously for males only. According to the Talmud and the Halacha, females do not need education and are explicitly forbidden from some forms of study. Until modern times, most Jewish women received no formal education and were mostly illiterate.”

Hence, while Westerners may castigate Arabs for suppressing or forbidding the education of women, let us keep in mind that this was not unusual at all in Judaism or even in Christianity until recent times. Modern Israeli Jews are divided, of course. Most are “secular” or “cultural” Jews. And yet most of these cannot help but be influenced by the very religion that has shaped their culture. Then there are the religious Jews, who exert a powerful influence in Israeli politics today. Dr. Israel Shahak says in Jewish Fundamentalism, page 7,

“Israeli religious Jews are divided into two distinctly different groups. The members of the religiously more extreme group are called Haredim. (The singular word is Haredi or Hared.) . . .”

Dr. Shahak goes on to explain that the Haredim are divided into two parties: Yahadut Ha’Torah (Judaism of the Law), which is primarily composed of Eastern European Jews, and the Shas Party, comprised mostly of Oriental Haradim. Then on page 37, 38 he writes,

“By design, Haredi rabbis and politicians select secular women in politics as the primary targets of their attacks, even though they could pinpoint secular men as much, if not more, for transgressions of religious law. The Haredim repeatedly refer to Jewish women, engaged in politics, as witches, bitches, or demons. Although a bit crude at times in the use of descriptive language, the Haredim approach mirrors to a great extent traditional Judaism’s broadly based position regarding women. This position not only restricts the rights of women but in many ways holds women in contempt. Rule 8 in Chapter 3 of the *Kitzur Shulthan Aruch (Abridgement of Shulhan Aruch)*, an elementary textbook for Jews with little talmudic education, for example, dictates: ‘A male should not walk between two females or two dogs or two pigs. In the same manner the males should not allow a woman, dog or pig to walk between them.’ All Haredi boys between the ages of ten and twelve study and are required to observe this rule. (Few dogs and no pigs can be found in

Haredi neighborhoods.) Traditional Judaism also prohibits women from playing even insignificant roles in politics. . . .

America has recently been exposed to the rule in some Arab countries prohibiting women from driving automobiles. But not many realize that there is a similar rule among the Haredi Jews. Dr. Shahak writes on page 38,

“Women are forbidden to drive buses or taxis; they can drive private cars only if no males apart from those in their own families or other women are passengers. These and many rules are followed in Haredi neighborhoods.”

But the most insulting and degrading statement of all is again mentioned by Dr. Shahak on page 38 of his book,

“The numerous misogynistic statements in the Talmud and in talmudic literature constitute a part of every Haredi male’s sacred study. The statement in Tractate Shabat, page 152b, defining a woman is exemplary: ‘A woman is a sack full of excrement’.”

Dr. Shahak, on page 40, quotes a well-known Israeli journalist, Kadid Leper, who wrote an article on April 18, 1997 entitled, “**Woman is a sack full of excrement.**” Leper’s article stated:

“Beatings, sexual brutality, cruelty, deprivation of rights, use of a woman as merely a sexual object; you can find all of this there [in the Talmud] . . . For two thousand years women had a well-defined place in the Jewish religion [Orthodox Judaism]; this place is different from what the rabbinical establishment describes; according to the Halacha, the place of women is in the garbage heap together with cattle and slaves. According to the Jewish religion [Orthodox Judaism] a man buys for himself a slave woman for her entire life simply by providing food and dress and granting to his wife the sexual act.”

Kadid Leper is describing for us the bondwoman relationship that a wife might have to endure in an Old Covenant marriage modeled after Hagar. Biblical evidence shows that Abram did not treat Hagar as “a sack of excrement,” but the laws of the day would have done nothing to prevent it if Abram had chosen to mistreat her. She was, after all, just a slave.

Dr. Shahak makes it clear that Orthodox Judaism—as currently practiced in the Israeli state—is still very much influenced by the view that women are just so much dung. The more religious one is in his practice of Judaism, the more likely he is to be shaped by this view of women. Secular Jews, of course, often sharply disagree with this Orthodox evaluation of womanhood. In fact, this is one source of sharp contention between various Israeli Jews and is certainly one of the reasons why many Jews are “secular.”

Non-Jews are often surprised and even shocked to hear of the true nature of Judaism. If they ask an Orthodox Jew about it, they will often hear strong denials. This is because much of the Talmudic writings are devoted to the question of how to keep the Gentiles from discovering what Jews believe about them. In fact, the Talmud allows most Jewish practices to be set aside momentarily, if they would provoke hostility among the non-Jews. Further, the rabbis openly teach that Jews are duty-bound to lie and deceive others about the true nature of talmudic teachings, because this might prove harmful to Jews.

The Emancipation of Jews from the Rabbis

Until the 1800’s the governments in Europe usually allowed the Jews to govern themselves. This meant that the rabbis ruled their own people and enforced Orthodox Jewish laws. Dr. Shahak says in Jewish History, page 54, 55,

“In addition, the [Jewish] Patriarch was empowered to tax the Jews and to discipline them by imposing fines, flogging and other punishments. He used this power in order to

suppress Jewish heresies and (as we know from the Talmud) to persecute Jewish preachers who accused him of taxing the Jewish poor for his personal benefit.

“We know from Jewish sources that the tax-exempt rabbis used excommunication and other means within their power to enhance the religious hegemony of the Patriarch. We also hear, mostly indirectly, of the hate and scorn that many of the Jewish peasants and urban poor in Palestine had for the rabbis, as well as of the contempt of the rabbis for the Jewish poor (usually expressed as contempt for the ‘ignorant’).”

The European monarchs benefited from this arrangement, because 90 percent of the fines paid in the Jewish courts went to the host government. Yet this self-government meant that the rabbis ruled the Jewish people themselves and enforced Talmudic law upon them, subjecting the Jews to the bondage of men’s traditions. After the French Revolution in the 1790’s, Napoleon gave Jews equal status before the law, and by 1830 this emancipation was largely complete throughout most of Europe. They were allowed to be educated and to hold offices and to live where they pleased. Suddenly, Jews began to see the outside world, and this essentially broke the power of the rabbis over them.

Many saw the contrasting freedom of the non-Jewish world and became disillusioned with Judaism itself. This brought about the rise of the secular Jew, who rejected not only Judaism and Christianity but the idea of God Himself. Dr. Shahak says in Jewish History, page 66,

“With the advent of the modern state, the abolition of serfdom and the achievement of minimal individual rights, the special socio-economic function of the Jews necessarily disappears. Along with it disappear also the power of the Jewish community over its members; individual Jews in growing numbers win the freedom to enter the general society of their countries. Naturally, this transition aroused a violent reaction both on the part of Jews (especially their rabbis) and of those elements in European society who opposed the open society and for whom the whole process of liberation of the individual was anathema.”

When Jews began to be allowed access to mainstream European life, they were able to begin to break out of the closed life of the Jewish community. No longer did he have to submit to the government of the rabbis. No longer did he have to abide by the Jewish regulations, lest he be punished by the Jewish authorities. The power of the rabbis over the average Jew began to decline in direct proportion to the rise of the disillusioned (hence, “secular”) Jew. These were finally able to read and discuss new ideas of liberation that were very important to them.

Eventually, women were able to join the class of educated people, and they too became enlightened on the principles of individual liberty in contrast to the bondage of classic Judaism. Hence, today, the classic Jewish attitude toward women is generally held by only the very religious Jews. Even so, it does form the basis of Jewish religion and culture, and even secular Jews are not immune to its influence. For this reason, many secular Jewish women have become activists in the Women’s Liberation Movement. They really did need emancipation from the countless rabbinic laws that had enslaved them to meaningless rituals and to slave-minded men. From a Christian perspective, the problem with that movement lies mostly in the fact that its philosophy is atheistic, for they have discarded God along with Judaism.

Inasmuch as the apostle Paul equated the Old Jerusalem, the Old Covenant, and Judaism itself with Hagar (Gal. 4:25) this is of interest to us in our study of Old Covenant marriage. Hagar’s marriage with Abram is a picture of Israel’s marriage with God that was performed by Moses at Mount Sinai. It is based upon the Old Covenant, in that it leads to bondage, rather than liberation (or “Jubilee”). While the Bible itself does not advocate modern Jewish attitudes toward women—even under the Old Covenant, nevertheless, Old Covenant marriages did form the basis

of bondage. This formed the seed of the problem, and men's traditions (idols of the heart) later turned it into a severe problem. In other words, Abram did not think of Hagar as a mere beast with a satanic soul, and he loved Ishmael very much (Gen. 17:18), even treating him as a full son. However, it cannot be ignored that Hagar's official, legal status was that of a bondwoman.

Old Covenant Marriage

Abraham had two wives, Sarah and Hagar. Hagar was a bondwoman. She was Sarah's slave that Pharaoh had given her in Egypt as restitution for taking her into his harem (Jasher 15:31). Hagar's legal relationship with Abraham was different from Sarah's. But first, let us quote from Gen. 16:3 to bear witness with Paul that Hagar was indeed a "wife," and not merely a concubine:

³ And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his WIFE.

The difference between a slave-wife and a free-wife is that a slave-wife is still just a slave in the final analysis. Jesus tells us something about slaves in John 15:15,

¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

When God gave a word to Abraham, he did not need to consult Hagar as a double witness to that word. In fact, he was not required to tell her anything beyond what she was commanded to do. He merely issued her commands, and, as a bondwoman, she was expected to be obedient. She did not have to be given any explanation. She had no input in the decision-making process.

By way of contrast, Sarah did assist Abraham in making decisions. In fact, it was Sarah herself who suggested that Abraham take Hagar as a wife to bring forth the promised son. We read in Gen. 16:2,

² So Sarai said to Abram, Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

In the next verse we read that Sarai gave Hagar to her husband Abram as his wife. Hagar belonged to Sarai, so Abram could not violate her rights of ownership by taking his wife's slave. Sarah not only had property rights, but she also shared her discernments with her husband in order to seek confirmation.

Hagar herself had no choice in the matter, nor is there any indication that she was consulted. The decisions were made for her. She was, after all, only a slave.

Marriage covenants have been made for thousands of years, but there are really only two types of marriage covenant: Hagar and Sarah, or bond and free. In a Hagar-style marriage covenant, the husband is the sole decision-maker, and the wife has no part in the decision-making process. She is only expected to be obedient as a good servant or slave. "Leave the decisions to us," such men tell their wives. "You need to know your place in God's order." Yes, that is God's order—if one's marriage is based upon the Old Covenant. Just call such wives "Hagar," for they are mere bondservants and know not what their master is doing.

What men do not often realize is that if their wives are Hagar, then they are not Abraham, but merely an Abram. Abram begat Ishmael through Hagar. Abraham begat Isaac through Sarah. It was not until God changed Abram's name to Abraham that Sarah brought forth Isaac, the promised seed. This is an important part of the historical allegory.

The difference between Abram and Abraham is the letter “H” in the middle of his name. When this Hebrew letter appears in the middle of a word or name, it signifies inspiration and revelation. It is the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Five is the number of Grace. It is pronounced by exhaling one’s breath. It signifies, therefore, the breath of God, much like God breathing His breath into Adam’s nostrils (Gen. 2:7).

Men who are married to a Hagar can never rise beyond an Abram, nor will their callings exceed giving birth to Ishmael. If a man aspires to become an Abraham, he must do so through the New Covenant, and He must therefore be married to a Sarah.

For a woman to move from Sarai to Sarah, the change was also in the letter “H” but this time at the end of her name. When this Hebrew letter appears at the end of a word or name, it means “what comes from.” The Hebrew word *Sar* means a prince. Sarah means “what comes from a prince,” but because the “H” at the end also makes the word feminine, the name means “princess,” a girl that comes from a prince.

This is NOT to say that one must be married in order for one’s calling to bring forth an Isaac. The principle has applications beyond marriage and family. The same principle is applicable in Church government and in the political realm. The pastor is like the husband, and the congregation is like the wife. If a pastor treats the congregation like Hagar, his ministry will never rise beyond the level of the Old Covenant.

Likewise, in civil government, if the ruling parties treat the people like Hagar, the nation itself cannot rise beyond the level of the Old Covenant and will not manifest the Kingdom of God. One of the early American revolutionary writers, Thomas Paine, wrote in his *Dissertation on the First Principles of Government*,

“The right of voting for representatives is the primary right by which other rights are protected. To take away this right is to reduce a man to slavery, for slavery consists in being subject to the will of another, and he that has not a vote in the election of representatives is in this case.”

Paine’s definition of slavery was in the context of civil government, but the same definition generally holds true in the relationship between husband and wife. His definition, of course, does not deal with the basic question of happiness or contentment. Some slaves are happy as slaves, because their masters are benevolent and treat them with respect. The same is true with wives who are bondwomen (slaves). However, such a relationship is not the ideal, unless such slaves are incapable of coping with the responsibilities of freedom, where they must earn an honest living and take care of themselves.

In the next chapter we will show the practical differences between Hagar and Sarah and how these women represent two types of marriage relationships today.

Chapter Three: Sarah and the New Covenant

Love is what gives meaning to life. Without love, life is merely a marathon, a test of endurance. An unloved woman—such as Jacob’s wife, Leah—will always suffer for it, and her children are traumatized as well. Whereas Hagar is the primary pattern of the Old Covenant, Leah is a strong secondary pattern. Jacob married Leah and Rachel. Leah was first, Rachel was last, but Jacob did not love Leah as he did Rachel. Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah first. And so, Leah was a mere pawn in her father’s game.

We learn from Leah that the children of the Old Covenant are much more numerous than the children of the New Covenant (Rachel). Leah had six children, while Rachel had only two—and even these were born last. Jacob’s dysfunctional children from Leah sold Rachel’s son into Egypt as a slave. This shows both the pattern of slavery itself and the Egypt factor, even as we have seen with Hagar, the Egyptian, who is in bondage with her children.

The New Covenant Marriage Based on Love

A New Covenant marriage is based upon love. Even if we do not begin our marriage with the capability of Agape love in its purest form, we are to develop that art as the Lord leads us. Ultimately, God teaches us not only to love in our actions, but to become love, even as He is love. 1 John 4:18 says,

¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

There are different levels of love portrayed in the New Testament. The Greek word, *Phileo*, describes brotherly love, which is why *Philadelphia* means “the city of brotherly love.” This kind of love is good, but it is not the highest form of love. The Greek word, *Agape*, is the love of God, and it is the word used in 1 John 4:18.

Children first learn *Phileo* love from their parents, because this is all they are capable of manifesting so long as they are immature. *Phileo* love is a judicial love. Parents spend much of their time judging and refereeing disputes between their children in order to teach them *Phileo* love. If they are disobedient, they are subject to correction, which always instills in them a certain amount of fear. This is why *Phileo* is not perfect love. *Phileo* still contains the fear factor.

Prov. 1:7 says, “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*” Fear in moderation is necessary in discipline, for children must learn to respect the rights of others. But ultimately, fear must be replaced by love, or it will be detrimental to future relationships. If they remain in the *Phileo* level for the rest of their lives, they may be bound in the subconscious mind by fears. They may become legalistic, demanding their rights and jealously guarding against all infringement of those rights. When such people formulate religions or their interpretations of religious thought, they tend to make vengeance a virtue and ultimately a religious duty. This has been most evident in recent years in the tit-for-tat vengeance cycle between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

This judicial love in *Phileo* is the basis of the Old Covenant, where the law is applied to teach men the basic difference between right and wrong, and where the biblical judges must decide disputes and issue judgments to correct injustices among neighbors. It is the love of the immature.

A mature love is *Agape*. This is the kind of love taught by the New Covenant. It goes beyond the judicial, but also presumes a knowledge of *Phileo* love. It is necessary to know the basic

standards of right and wrong to lay the proper foundations for *Agape* love. As children begin to mature, they learn to go beyond demanding their rights. They begin to show kindness, grace, and forgiveness toward those who do not show them *Phileo* love, even as Jesus showed kindness, grace, and forgiveness as He was nailed to the Cross.

Even as *Phileo* love is conditional, so also is *Agape* unconditional love.

Phileo love is the imperfect love of the immature. *Agape* is the perfect love of the mature. But one cannot really manifest *Agape* love without having first learned *Phileo* love, for it is impossible to claim to love unconditionally while doing basic injustice. In both *Phileo* and *Agape* love, the divine law is relevant, but it is applied differently on each level. In *Phileo* love, a man demands his lawful rights; in *Agape* a man is willing to give up his lawful rights for a higher purpose. But without the law, there would be no rights to grasp or to release.

Hence, a man made perfect in *Phileo* love will never do injustice to another person, yet he will also not allow any man to do him injustice. In contrast, a man made perfect in *Agape* love will never do injustice to another person, but he is willing to give up his own lawful rights for the sake of those who are yet immature.

And so the apostle Paul tells us in Rom. 5:7, 8,

⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Paul goes on to define “us” as God’s “enemies.” He died for us while we were yet His enemies.

It is easy to die for a good man. All religions advocate this. Many Muslims would die for Mohammed. Many Jews would die for Moses. Christians would die for Jesus. But how many of us would die for an enemy? This is the love of God as defined by the New Covenant. Such love is not a virtue in either Islam or in Judaism, for they can have no such example to follow as we do. Such love was not manifested in either Moses or Mohammed, although one might argue that Moses offered to give up his life for the sinful nation (Ex. 32:32). In his intercession on the mount, he was a type of Christ (Heb. 7:25), but God did not require Moses to die for the people.

New Covenant Decision-Making

Who makes the decisions in the family? This is one of the primary marks that distinguish an Old Covenant marriage from a New Covenant marriage. Does a man consult his wife (or vice versa) before making decisions that affect the other? Does her opinion really matter, or is she consulted only to give her the illusion of self-worth?

Most marriages do not manifest a pure form of either Hagar or Sarah but are various mixtures of the two. While there are some husbands who never consult their wives, even in household decisions, most husbands today consult their wives on at least some matters before coming to a decision. More relevant today is how any differences of opinion are resolved. If the two are not in agreement, whose opinion will prevail?

We have already shown that when God separated Eve from Adam, He gave the woman the El Shaddai portion of His image. To the man He gave the Yahweh portion of His image. Since each perfectly reflected a portion of the divine nature, there was no need for one to be in authority over the other.

It would be foolish to ask if Yahweh would ever disagree with and overrule the will of El Shaddai. God is not double-minded. God may have more than one side to His personality, but the two halves of His brain are always in perfect unity in any decision that He makes. The ideal

marriage on earth is the same, except that God’s male and female personalities reside in two beings, rather than in one.

The goal of marriage is unity. The path to unity is love. Godly unity does not mean that the wife must always agree and do what her husband tells her to do—as we might expect from a bondswoman who is content with that station in life. True unity cannot be achieved by suppressing all dissenting opinions. True unity is being of one mind and heart. In a biblical context, true unity is when both husband and wife hear God’s voice, and that voice tells them the same thing—or perhaps different things that harmonize and result in the same conclusion.

True unity has more to do with being in agreement than having one person in submission to the other. And being in agreement cannot be achieved apart from both parties hearing from God—otherwise, they could BOTH be wrong, yet be in agreement in their error.

If God speaks a Word to the husband that affects the family, he ought to communicate this to his wife so that she may ask God for herself. If she receives a confirmation of the Word, then they know that they have heard from both Yahweh and El Shaddai. With such a double witness, they may then proceed to act upon that Word.

But suppose God were to speak to the husband, telling him to move the family to another country. If he immediately “obeyed” the Word and told the wife to start packing, he would be treating her as a bondswoman, rather than as a freewoman. He may protest, saying, “*God told me to move the family,*” but his marriage is still based upon the Old Covenant. He is Abram (at best), and she is Hagar.

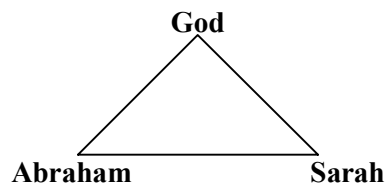
Here is an illustration of how an Old Covenant relationship works:

Old Covenant



In the Old Covenant marriage relationship, God might tell Abram to move from Hebron to Jerusalem. Abram would then tell Hagar, “*Hagar, I received the Word of the Lord to move to Jerusalem. Start packing our belongings. We leave tomorrow.*” She would then begin to pack and get ready to move to Jerusalem. At no time was she consulted, for she was only a slave.

Here is an illustration of how the New Covenant relationship works:



In the New Covenant marriage relationship, God might tell Abraham to move from Hebron to Jerusalem. Abraham would then tell Sarah, “*Sarah, I believe I received the Word of the Lord to move to Jerusalem. Would you please pray about it and see if God [El Shaddai] tells you the*

same thing?” If she returns, saying, “*Yes, God told me the same thing,*” then they would move. However, if Sarah returned and told him, “*God said your imagination is playing tricks on you,*” then they would each have to pray further until they came to the truth of the matter and came into unity. If Abraham were to overrule his wife, then he would be reducing her to the status of Hagar and would no longer be manifesting a New Covenant relationship.

So long as both parties are in agreement, there is no problem—nor is their relationship tested to see if it is Hagar or Sarah. Ideally, both husband and wife would hear the same thing—even if the revelation comes forth in different language. For example, God may tell Abraham to move to Jerusalem for the purpose of some particular ministry. But God may say nothing to Sarah about ministry, but would instead assure her of His protection and that it would not disrupt the family or household. The language is different, because Yahweh and El Shaddai address the specific needs of husband and wife. But the bottom line is that they are moving to Jerusalem.

So long as they are in unity—or as long as they both seek God until they come into agreement—there is never an occasion where one would overrule the other. Nor is there any reason why they would have to compromise, saying, “*I’ll let you have your way this time, but next time we will do it my way!*” Such compromises merely allow them to each play the part of Hagar at different times. While this may be preferable to having just one of them play Hagar’s role all the time, it is not reflective of the heart and mind of God.

The heart of God is that both husband and wife would hear God perfectly, for this makes authority irrelevant. That is, no one would have to overrule the other or “pull rank.” The needs of both would be fully addressed. The full mind of God would be revealed in all matters. This is the heart and soul of a New Covenant marriage. This is what God had in mind at the beginning, when He said they would become “one flesh.”

The Essential Difference

The essential difference between Hagar and Sarah is this: When one spouse is required to submit one hundred percent, while the other has no requirement at all to submit—this is absolute bondage and would be a pure Old Covenant marriage. In such cases, a woman is a mere “sack of excrement,” as one Jewish rabbi says in the Talmud. It is also possible that a wife might treat her husband as a sack of excrement. Either way, the attitude is wrong and unchristian.

On the other hand, when both spouses are required (equally) to give one hundred percent, this is a pure New Covenant marriage.

Most marriages lie somewhere between these two absolutes. Many remain in a roughly 50/50 relationship and can only go beyond this as they learn to trust the other with their lives. A 50/50 relationship is concerned with fairness and justice, rather than unity. It is a relationship that is based upon compromise, which is necessary when husband and wife are not in unity. This willingness to compromise shows love, but it is *phileo* love, not *agape* love. It is the kind of love that is seen between brothers and sisters competing for their own rights but learning that they have equal rights.

This imperfect love is shown in John 21:15-17, when Jesus asked Peter a very important question.

Jesus: “Peter, do you *agape* me?”

Peter: “Lord, you know that I *phileo* you.”

Jesus: “Feed my lambs. . . . Peter, do you *agape* me?”

Peter: “Yes, Lord, you know that I *phileo* you.”

Peter still did not understand what Jesus was asking. Peter's love was still imperfect, for he was only capable at that time to manifest *phileo* love toward Jesus, even though they had walked together for over three years. So then Jesus lowers the standard of love to the level that Peter could achieve. He asks, "Peter, do you *phileo* me?"

Peter was grieved that Jesus had questioned him three times, but he still did not comprehend the difference between *phileo* and *agape*. Yet he answered the third time, "Yes, Lord, you know that I *phileo* you." Only later would Peter understand the essential difference.

Trust

Trust is the factor that allows each to give one hundred percent, knowing that love compels the other to act responsibly toward the other. With trust like this, each is willing to do only what his/her spouse discerns to be the will of God.

It is a matter of TRUST. But it takes time and experience to develop trust. This is how a marriage relationship develops and deepens over a period of time. But it will not work if either spouse believes that the other has difficulty hearing from God (or cannot hear from God at all). It will not work if either spouse believes that the other is acting selfishly and prefers his/her own will to God's will.

No one wants to trust his or her life to a despot, because that is the moral equivalent of selling one's self into slavery. And yet that is often how marriage has been portrayed in the Church. Christian marriage counseling generally would counsel the wife to submit to her husband (i.e., make herself his servant), even as the Church submits to the rule of Christ. They also counsel the husband to love his wife as Christ loves the Church. While such counsel is valid, it is nearly always misunderstood, and hence, it is not practiced properly.

From Submission to Ruling with Christ

The Church does indeed need to submit to Christ as Hagar to Abram. But Christ is not content to remain in such an immature relationship with His Bride. The Bride is called to grow spiritually until she comes fully into perfection and maturity, so that she can take her place as a Sarah, rather than remain forever as a Hagar. One can only learn to rule by learning to be ruled. Submission, then, is the path to the authority of a godly ruler. The law brings us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Those who do not learn to submit to the divine law will not qualify to rule over ten cities, five, or even one city (Luke 19:17-26). Jesus said that those who put away His law will be the least in the Kingdom (Matt. 5:19). They are citizens by faith in Christ, but rulers only by learning obedience by submitting to His authority and law.

The Bible says that we, as the Bride of Christ, will "*rule and reign with Christ*" (Rev. 20:6). In other words, the Bride of Christ (Sarah) has real authority. She does not simply let her Husband exercise the authority. She is, in fact, growing spiritually in order to learn how to exercise authority in the earth, so she can do the same. Yet it can only work if she is in full unity with Him. And unity is the goal of this marriage.

But, you say, she will never exercise authority over her Husband, Jesus Christ. That is true, but only because their unity has made authority over each other *irrelevant*. The fact is, once they have come into full unity, there is no need for either one to tell the other what to do, for each will already know by nature precisely what to do. This situation is reflected in the New Covenant description in Heb. 8:11,

¹¹ And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.

When we all know Him from the least to the greatest, and when all are in perfect unity with Him, then it can be properly said that the law has been fulfilled. The law will then cease to exist in its external form as a set of commandments. The law itself—which defines the will of God—is being eaten, assimilated, and absorbed into our beings. As it becomes internalized, we begin to think and act like Jesus, who never once violated the law and did only what His Father did.

When all mankind has arrived at that place, then the law (as a set of external commandments) will pass away, for it will no longer be relevant. Unity will have replaced authority and its commands. Everyone's life will reflect perfectly every word in the law and, indeed, the entire Word of God, spoken and written.

Meanwhile, we are called to enjoy such a relationship with Christ and to be examples to the rest of the world. As we move from the Pentecostal Age into the Age of Tabernacles, the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) and the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19) will bring a greater opportunity for the world to see by example how the New Covenant relationship works. Such overcomers, however, will yet have to exercise authority over the rest of mankind, because these too must learn obedience in a Hagar relationship with God until they learn to trust Him fully and come into full unity with Him. Hence, it will be necessary for the law to go forth from Zion (Is. 2:3), when the overcomers "*rule and reign*" with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:6).

The purpose of the overcomers' authority in the earth is to teach the nations by example what it means to have a personal relationship with Christ. It will be the greatest evangelistic work of all time. During that thousand-year reign of King Jesus, His "Sarah" Bride will teach all nations of His ways (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-5). They will learn not merely by hearing words, but by observation—seeing real people who have come into the place of divine character. No longer will man have just one Man to observe, such as occurred when Jesus walked the earth two thousand years ago. At that time, the manifestation of the sons of God, every nation will have its share of overcomers to observe in order to know the love of God and the mind of Christ.

The Hagar relationship as a bondwoman is not evil, but neither is it the final goal. Its purpose is good, for it teaches us to submit to the leading of the Spirit while we are yet immature in our spiritual growth. It teaches us obedience while we are yet in a semi-rebellious carnal state. The commandments of God provide us with a standard of right and wrong while we are yet learning the difference. It is, therefore, a transitional relationship with God that is good, but not perfect.

And so, when Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22) and for slaves to submit to their masters (Eph. 6:5), he is not giving us bad or uninspired advice. We cannot and should not invalidate the Scriptures. However, we should understand that this is a temporary situation, not the ultimate goal either in a future life or in the present one.

At least as important is the requirement of husbands to love their wives (Eph. 5:25) in the same way that Christ loved the Church. This puts a greater responsibility upon the husband than it does upon the wife, for Christ's *agape*-love was unconditional and never oppressive. This level of love requires a husband to understand his wife and her needs, to seek her welfare and happiness, and above all never to insist upon his own rights.

Nowhere is there a biblical command for a husband to subject his wife to himself. Submission is something a wife does primarily as a result of the trust she feels toward her husband. If she does not or cannot trust him, she will not be able to submit to him for any great length of time. Trust is something that the husband earns when his wife sees his character, his love toward her, and his relationship with God. Trust cannot be forced upon or demanded from the wife.

Many men (like Peter in his early years) do not know the real meaning of love and therefore cannot understand why their wives do not fully trust them. Men often think that their prime duty

is to protect their families; and while that is a good thing, this is not the meaning of love. Men often think that their prime duty is to provide food and home for their families. While this is a good thing, this is not the meaning of love either. Most women would gladly trade food and home for such things as kindness, consideration, humility, gentleness, and other things that describe genuine love. These are the things that make a woman happy and fulfilled in life. These are the things that set her apart from a mere servant or slave. If all men knew this simple secret, and learned how to apply it, the entire world would be transformed.

Few women enter marriage with the goal of being a bondswoman. Only those whose religions have convinced them of the virtues of slavery—and who therefore have no higher expectations—can be relatively content in such a marriage. And yet once their eyes are opened to the New Covenant and its application to marriage, they can no longer be content as a mere Hagar.

We do not mean to sow seeds of discontent, but in the interest of imparting a greater understanding of the New Covenant, we must take this risk.

Becoming One Flesh

God Himself established the Hagar relationship in the garden, after Eve was the first to eat of the forbidden fruit in the garden. Only then was the husband's authority established over her. After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God told Eve in Gen. 3:16, "*Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*" And yet, God had already established the goal of marriage clear in Gen. 2:24—"they shall be one flesh." That is, they shall be in full unity of body, mind, and spirit.

A husband's authority over his wife was not the original family order. It was instituted later as the result of sin—but was not so from the beginning.

As we said earlier, unity is the end and goal of authority. When unity is achieved, no one will have to tell the other what to do, for all will know what to do. No one will have to give orders, for all will know what to do and will do it without any commandment. This is the New Covenant relationship.

Most marriages are somewhere between pure Hagar and pure Sarah. Many are stuck and do not know how to continue, because they do not really understand the problem from a biblical perspective. It is my hope, of course, that others will be enlightened to know the things that God has shown us in our own marriage relationship and in the Scriptures. We want everyone to have as good a marriage relationship as we do.

Gen. 2:24 says,

²³ And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴ For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

This verse is often taken as a reference to physical union in a sexual sense, but it is much more than that. The Hebrew word for man used here is *ish*. The Hebrew word for woman is *ishah*, which means "what comes from *ish* (man)." It is a picture of the unity between male and female and the necessity of unity. Yet becoming "one flesh" does not mean that they physically become a single person. Unity does not mean that one loses his or her being or personality or will. Yet it means that the lost rib is being brought back to the side of the man. To be "one flesh" really means to become one spirit. When the man's spirit and the woman's spirit are both replaced by the same Holy Spirit, then they are truly one.

It means that they see eye to eye on all things, because both of them know the will of God and are in perfect agreement. It is two eyes seeing as one and focused together with perfect vision. Jesus said in Matt. 6:22, “*if your eye be single [haplous, “folded together”], your whole body will be full of light.*” Both eyes must be able to focus in order to see a single object clearly. In this we see the difference between Leah and Rachel. Leah was cross-eyed; Rachel was not. Leah’s eye condition thus prophesied of her marriage relationship with Jacob in that their eyes were not “single” (not in focus). Because Leah was not loved by Jacob, she did not enjoy the type of love relationship that Rachel had with Jacob.

Paul refers to Genesis 2:24 in 1 Cor. 6:16, 17,

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

In other words, the marriage principle of “one flesh” applies also to our relationship with Christ. Insofar as we are part of the Bride of Christ, we are joined with Him in a New Covenant relationship. We are, then, “*one spirit with Him.*” It does not mean that we have given up our individuality, but that we are His lost rib that has been returned to Him. This does not mean that we give up our individuality to become part of His body; yet we become part of His body by being one spirit with Him. It is not a matter of being physically joined with Him; it is a matter of returning to our rightful place in Christ, for He is missing a “rib” until we are rejoined to Him.

The Authority of Husband and Wife

A husband’s authority in the area of decision-making is only relevant in an Old Covenant marriage—and even then, only when there is disagreement. Abram exercises his authority and tells Hagar what to do, and she does it like a good bondswoman. But in a New Covenant relationship, where a husband and wife begin to truly move in unity, each hearing the Word of the Lord, they begin to move back to the original will of God for marriage that was established before sin came into being. When people begin to move fully into *Agape* love, the need for authority diminishes and finally disappears altogether. When they move in unity, each wanting only to know the will of God, there is no more occasion for a husband to overrule his wife (or vice versa) in an exercise of authority.

But if, for some reason, a husband might feel it necessary to overrule his wife’s discernment (or vice versa), it would mean that they had reverted to an Old Covenant relationship. It would be a setback, a failure on the part of at least one of the spouses. In such a case, at least one of them may have to simply submit to the will (decision) of the other—even without being in agreement. Yet this is evidence of a Hagar relationship, and no one ought to be content to remain there for very long.

The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 7:4,

⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Much of Christian teaching is fond of quoting the first half of this verse, while ignoring the last half. They seem willing to affirm a man’s authority over his wife, but not the other way around. The fact is, a husband and wife do not own themselves, but they own each other. They have equal authority over the other spouse. This is the principle by which the apostle Paul tells husbands and wives not to defraud each other of sexual relations (7:3); however, it is a general principle of the New Covenant relationship.

Double Witness and Timing

The double witness not only establishes all truth, but also the *timing* of its fulfillment. We see this best illustrated in Gen. 41:32, where Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's two dreams,

³² Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined [established by two witnesses] by God, and God will quickly bring it about [timing].

Pharaoh had two dreams, the first dealing with cows and the second dealing with sheaves of grain. Joseph had a revelation of the double witness law and told Pharaoh that the two dreams not only "established" the truth, but also determined its timing. There are many times when one spouse will have a discernment or revelation from God, but the other will not receive anything for a time. It might be, of course, that the revelation itself was faulty, or came from the person's soul realm, rather than by the Spirit. In such cases, the spouse may get a "no" from the Lord, or perhaps may simply receive nothing at all—no double witness.

A second possibility is that God has chosen to give the double witness at a later time in order to establish the timing of its fulfillment. For example, if God tells Abraham to move to Jerusalem, but then says nothing to Sarah, it may be that they are supposed to move in another year or in ten years. In such a case God may give Sarah the word in another year or in another ten years. But when both are in agreement, then the time is near for the move. The double witness itself may in this way tell them *when* to move to Jerusalem.

God will often do this in order to test the relationship. It is common for a husband to force the issue on the grounds that he "knows" that he heard from God—even if she has heard nothing. And so on that basis, he may put his wife into the position of a Hagar once again, telling her to get ready to move. Such a husband needs to learn patience, even as Abraham had to learn patience. He also needs to learn that a Word from heaven is not established as a Word on earth until it has been properly witnessed by the one called to bear witness. Even if an angel from heaven were to give Abraham such a revelation, it would still require a double witness.

That is God's lawful order.

Badgering the Witness

A New Covenant relationship breaks down any time one spouse finds it necessary to dictate the will of God to the other. It is not possible to have a New Covenant relationship unless both spouses are able to hear God's voice for themselves and are free to hear a contradictory answer without fear of punishment.

In other words, a husband cannot intimidate his wife into bearing witness to his revelation. If he does so, he is "badgering the witness" (as they say in a court room). She must know in her heart that he wants only to know the Word of God and has no desire simply to "be right." If he has an idol in the heart that gives him the need to be validated, then he needs to address that issue before his marriage can truly be called New Covenant.

I recall once when a prophet told me about a Word he had received from the Lord. He asked me to pray for a double witness. I recall being under stress and could not hear the Lord in that matter. Why? Because I knew from past observation that the prophet tended to punish anyone who did not validate his Word. Of course, he did not physically beat them, but simply threatened them with God's disapproval or judgment. It was little more than self-righteous coercion.

For example, he might receive a Word that he was to go to a particular place to do some sort of prophetic work or make some prophetic utterance or declaration. But in asking for a double witness, he might say, "*The Lord told me that if I do not go, then ten thousand people will die in some kind of disaster. So I want you to pray and get a double witness that would allow me to go.*"

In such a case, he would be badgering the witness, putting pressure upon the double witness to get the same Word—otherwise, ten thousand people would die, and he (the double witness) would be responsible for their deaths. The double witness is thus not really free to hear God for himself. The prophet has already assumed that the Word is established, even before the double witness has heard from God. He has invoked the spirit of fear into the situation in order to ensure that his Word is validated.

I took note that this is often normal behavior for Church leaders of all kinds—and I learned what NOT to do.

The same type of behavior can be done within a family. It is said that the prime duty of a husband is to relieve his wife's fears—not to manipulate her by her fears. Fear and guilt are the two main things that carnal men use to manipulate other people.

Darla writes:

My husband and I came into a New Covenant relationship in 1992 (after 21 years of marriage). Until that time, though we had a very good relationship, it was still some mixture of Sarah and Hagar. He always consulted me about family decisions, but in the end I was content to follow the Word that he heard from God, for I did not believe that I had the same ability to hear from God. When he needed a double witness, he had to go outside the family to obtain it. But as time passed, he became more and more uncomfortable with that arrangement. When he would consult others for a witness, I felt left out and deep inside I didn't agree with his decisions. I was no longer content with our marriage arrangement.

I knew that the natural order was for me to be his double witness. But I did not think I could hear God's voice, and so he did not think I could either. Actually, we were both wrong, for I could indeed hear God. We simply did not understand the feminine intuitive language in which God was speaking to me.

Seeking God together as equal partners has transformed our marriage. Not only are we confident in knowing God's will for our lives, we also have a unity with each other that can't be broken.

Stephen continues:

In 1992 we finally came to the point where God made it very clear that He had been speaking to her all along and that we simply had not recognized His voice. After that, one of the first things God taught me was *never to manipulate her to extract the desired double witness*. She was not at all self-assertive and did not yet have the confidence that can come only by experience and by a husband's affirmation and encouragement. I had to work hard to assure her that her discernment was not only desired, but that if she received a contradictory word, I would not think less of her or discard her discernment as "wrong." It was not long before she really came to know that I had no need to be "right," but that I only wanted the Word of the Lord—and that I could only know that Word after her double witness "established" it.

In the next few years I saw her transformed from Hagar into Sarah. I saw her delight and marvel at the freedom she had to hear God for herself without fear of disapproval. No longer was she a mere bondservant—although in many ways she had been happy playing that role for 21 years, for she had been taught from early childhood to be submissive to her husband. I watched her confidence level grow as she developed a sense of great worth and value to me. I watched her level of spiritual maturity develop rapidly, and as she grew, she was able to fulfill her calling as a New Covenant wife.

When a woman feels valuable, she develops a sense of self-worth, or value. She finds meaning in life that far exceeds the servant's role of Hagar. My wife now tells me periodically that she is the happiest woman in the world. That makes me the happiest man, for I feel that I have succeeded in fulfilling my responsibility toward her. We serve each other, each meeting the other's needs. A wife needs to know that she is unique to her husband, that she fulfills a unique role that can be filled by no other person on earth.

A very important principle of the double witness is that not just anyone qualifies as a double witness. There are some general matters, of course, that anyone may qualify as a witness. But particularly in family matters, the husband and wife are the primary ones called to be each other's witnesses. Normally, one should not involve an outside witness on matters that concern the family, especially if this is done to bypass the witness of one spouse. Remember that God separated man and woman specifically in order to provide a double witness in family matters. Being such a witness is a calling, and with it comes a level of authority in this area.

Being Unequally Yoked Together

God will not be unequally yoked.

The King James Version of 2 Cor. 6:14 says, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*" This verse is based upon the law in Deut. 22:10, "*Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.*"

The law was speaking directly about farming, but Paul applies the principle to not having fellowship with idolatrous temples, for we are the temple of God. Yet the principle also applies to marriage, for marriage is fellowship on a personal level between a man and a woman. An ox is larger, stronger, and taller than an ass. The law was given partly as a protection for the ox, so that he would not have to make up for the weaker ass. Yet it was also given to protect the ass from being given too great a burden (calling) that it could not possibly fulfill.

Asses and oxen both represent servants in the Bible. The ox is a greater and more valuable servant, but the lowly asses are also good. In their symbolism, however, there was another major difference between them. The ox is a clean creature; the ass is unclean. The ox was normally quite obedient, while the ass had a reputation for being stubborn and "stiff-necked," as the Bible often puts it. The ox was often used as a sacrificial animal, and in that capacity it represented Christ, who fulfilled all of the sacrifices. The ass, however, was never used as a sacrifice. In fact, when the firstborn of an ass was born, it could not be given to God directly. A lamb had to be given in its place (Ex. 13:13).

In our book, [The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#), we show how wheat and asses are the two primary symbols of Pentecost in the Bible (and also in the "signs of the times" that we see today). In that context, the ox represents not only Christ Himself, but those of the Feast of Tabernacles.

God always follows His own law. In the marriage of Christ and the Church, God will not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. That is, He will not "marry" an unbelieving wife. But more than that, Christ (the Ox) will not be yoked together with the asses of Pentecost either—at least not in the final analysis. Asses are good and even useful, but they are not oxen.

This is also why there will be more than one resurrection, as we explained in other writings. Not all believers today are "oxen." Many are yet "asses," and they need more time to learn how to be oxen. And so, those of the first resurrection can be married to Christ before the rest of the believers. He will not be unequally yoked, for the law is the expression of His will. Therefore, it is a prophecy of what He will do.

But one might object, saying that Abraham was married to Hagar. Was this not an unequal yoke? The answer is in the fact that AbrahAM did not marry Hagar. ABRAM married Hagar.

The name change showed a development in his character from ass to ox. Hence, when Abram married Hagar, it was (prophetically speaking) two asses plowing together. Abram and Hagar were donkeys in training for the first thirteen years of their marriage. Then when Abram was 99 years old, he reached the place where he became an ox, spiritually speaking. Gen. 17:5 says that God then gave him a new name, AbRAHAM. This new relationship with God, reflected in his name change, made him eligible to bring forth Isaac, the true promised heir, a type of manifested son. At that point, Abraham and Hagar were unequally yoked, and it was not long before she and her son, Ishmael, were cast out.

Hagar no doubt had a genuine relationship with Christ, for in Gen. 16:11, 12 we read,

¹¹ The angel of the Lord said to her [Hagar] further, Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. ¹² And he will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers.

Hagar could never bring forth the promised seed that would be used to bring righteousness and the Kingdom of God into the earth. That was reserved for Sarah, who gave birth to Isaac. It is not that Ishmael was a bad man, for no doubt he, too, had a relationship with Christ. His father would certainly have taught him the ways of God. Yet he was destined to be a type and shadow of Pentecost, which can never bring forth the Kingdom of God, for that calling is reserved for the Feast of Tabernacles. Ishmael was half-Egyptian, because his mother was Egyptian. It is not that Egyptians are bad either, but Egypt represented the world system that brings men into bondage. The Feast of Pentecost was a leavened feast (Lev. 23:17), even as Ishmael was "leavened" with Egypt. In such a condition, people have the faith of Abraham, but they also tend to bring men into the bondage of Egypt. Such is the condition of the denominational system of religion that tends to enslave men to their denomination in the name of submitting to Jesus Christ.

Thus, we see that God has two wives also, even as Abraham did. In the Old Testament phase, Hagar was the old Jerusalem, as Paul tells us in Gal. 4:25. In the New Testament we find that the Church was not yet ready to move into the Feast of Tabernacles, and so they remained in a Pentecostal (leavened) level of relationship with God. This leaven brought about the spiritual degeneration that became manifested in later centuries in the Church.

Even as Hagar was the first to bring forth her son, so also did God give Pentecost the first opportunity to bring forth the Kingdom of God in the past 2,000 years. But no amount of time is enough for this New Testament Ishmael to bring forth the glory of God. History has proven that the Church soon attempted to establish the Kingdom of God by violent means. They executed heretics and called for crusades against the Muslims. In this way, the Church was reduced to the same violent methods as was prophesied about Ishmael in Gen. 16:12, "*his hand will be against everyone.*"

The Jews and Israelites of the Old Testament employed violent methods as well in taking the Kingdom (Promised Land). One may argue that God commanded them to do so, but this was only because they had earlier rejected the spiritual sword offered to them at Mount Sinai on that first day of Pentecost. (See chapter two of our book, The Laws of Spiritual Warfare.)

Violence is the established method for Ishmael in all its manifestations, but not for an Isaac company that is empowered by the Feast of Tabernacles.

God has been married to Hagar, the bondwoman, for the past 2,000 years. But all she could produce was another Ishmael. That is why the Kingdom of God could not be fully manifested in the earth in the Church of the Pentecostal Age. However, the Scripture says that ultimately Hagar

must be cast out (Gal. 4:30) in order to allow Sarah (the New Jerusalem) and her son (the Isaac company) to manifest the presence of Christ in the earth.

In essence, then, we see that God has two wives. The bondwoman is the Pentecostal Church of the past 2,000 years. The freewoman is the Tabernacles Church (the overcomers, the sons of God) that has waited in the background until the Tabernacles Age should come. Paul awaited this day, and he often urged the Church to be children of the freewoman, rather than of the bondwoman. The primary manifestation of the bondwoman in his day, of course, was Judaism, and so he wrote many letters, particularly Galatians, urging the Church to resist the tendency toward Judaism.

In fact, that tendency has again surfaced in the past century. Many Christian teachers have focused once again on the Old Jerusalem, making it the center of the Kingdom of God in the age to come. Many Christians go to the Old Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, thinking that this is where the glory will come. They do not realize that the glory departed from that place long ago (Jer. 7:1-16; Ez. 11:23). The prophet said that God would forsake Jerusalem like He did Shiloh some centuries earlier. Shiloh was where the glory of God first rested before the glory departed. That was the time Ichabod was born, whose name means “The glory is departed from Israel.” (See 1 Sam. 4:21.) For a full study of this, see chapter four of The Struggle for the Birthright.

So let us be children of the freewoman, that we might enjoy a better relationship with God.

The Old Covenant is Conditional

When Israel stood before God at the foot of Mount Sinai, they took a marriage vow as a Hagar bride, saying, “*All that the Lord has spoken, we will do*” (Ex. 19:8). The fact that this was a marriage vow is shown in the later prophets, who tell us that God was married to Israel. Jer. 3:14 says in the King James Version,

¹⁴ Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married to you. . .

Some have objected to this idea that God was married to Israel, claiming that the Hebrew term for “married” is baal, which means either “marry” or “rule.” (See Strong’s Concordance #1166.) They say that it in this case it ought to be translated as the NASB says,

¹⁴ Return, O faithless sons, declares the Lord; for I am a master to you.

First of all, the context of this passage in verse 8 shows that God was giving Israel a bill of divorce. One cannot divorce a mere servant or slave. Only a lawfully-married wife can receive a bill of divorce (Deut. 24:1-4). Hence, the context shows that the KJV is the best rendering. And yet, both are correct, because, as we have already shown, an Old Covenant marriage was a marriage to a bondwoman. In those days a husband was, in essence, a “master” to his wife.

Hosea 2:2, 7 also make mention of this marriage relationship—again, in the context of God divorcing Israel. Later in that chapter, the prophet speaks of God betrothing Israel again (2:20).

Thus, we can only conclude that God had married Israel and that the Old Covenant was a marriage covenant.

Looking more closely at the nature of this marriage covenant, we see that it was conditional upon obedience. This is unlike the New Covenant that is unconditional. The fact that God could divorce Israel (Jer. 3:8) without violating His own law proves the fact that the Old Covenant was conditional. It also shows us that divorce is not a sin, as many have been taught. God is not a sinner, yet He divorced Israel. Jer. 3:8 says,

⁸ 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.

When two people are married and they each vow to do something, it is a conditional covenant. In Exodus 19, Israel vowed to be obedient. In Lev. 26:1-13 and Deut. 28:1-14 God vowed that if she were obedient, He would bless her. If not, He would cast her out of His house. But before He sent Israel out of His house (Canaan), He had to give her a bill of divorce, as the law said (Deut. 24:1).

The law also makes it clear that a divorce really is a divorce—not a mere separation, as many have been taught. Deut. 24:2 says clearly,

² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.

A bill of divorce was required, because it was the woman's evidence that she was no longer married to that husband. This was her written evidence that would allow her to remarry, if she found another man to marry. The only marital prohibition given in the law is that once she has remarried someone else, her former husband cannot claim her as his wife, nor can she decide to return to her former husband. (See The Bible Says: Divorce and Remarriage is NOT Adultery.)

In the divine plan, God married Israel through the conditional Old Covenant. He did not marry her unconditionally, because that would have prevented Him from divorcing her when she committed adultery. It was in His plan to divorce her so that He could establish a New Covenant, a "better covenant" (Heb. 8:6). If the Old Covenant had been unconditional, it could never have come to an end, and the New Covenant could never have replaced it.

It was part of the divine plan that the imperfect would precede the perfect. It was part of the divine plan that the Old Covenant would be given the first opportunity to succeed. It was part of the divine plan that man would be given the first opportunity to be blessed (saved) by their obedience (works).

It was part of the divine plan that Hagar would bring forth Ishmael first. He was "born after the flesh," in that he was born by natural means. This was in contrast to Isaac, who was born by a miracle when Sarah was 90 years old. He was born "by promise" (Gal. 4:23).

Like Hagar, the Old Jerusalem was given the first opportunity to bring forth the promise of the Kingdom, but in rejecting the Messiah, they failed. It was left, then, to Sarah (the New Jerusalem) to bring forth the inheritors of the promise.

The Old Covenant in Ex. 19:5 said, "*IF you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant . . .*" It was conditional and therefore ultimately temporary.

The New Covenant is unconditional as stated in Jer. 31:31-34 and repeated in Heb. 8:8-12. The New Covenant has no "if" clauses in it, but is a one-sided covenant that binds God alone to bring us into a full knowledge of Himself. Hence, the New Covenant can come to an end only if God fails in His purpose. But God is not a failure. So we know that the New Covenant marriage between Christ and His Bride (Matt. 22:2; Luke 12:36) will not end in failure, for it is based upon "*a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises*" (Heb. 8:6).

This is the kind of ideal marriage that God envisioned and planned from the beginning. Jesus spoke of this when the Pharisees came to test him with the question in Matt. 19:3, "*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?*"

Jesus responded by showing God's intention from the beginning in verses 4-6,

⁴ And He answered and said, Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? ⁶ Consequently, they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

Jesus was referring to the original intent of God—not to the law regulating an Old Covenant marriage that is found in Deut. 24:1-4. Jesus was referring to the unconditional, perfect type of marriage that we have shown in this book, where husband and wife truly attained unity and agreement. In a New Covenant type of marriage, divorce is unthinkable and irrelevant.

The Pharisees, of course, knew nothing of the New Covenant. So they questioned Jesus further in verse 7,

⁷ They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her? ⁸ He said to them, Because of the hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been this way.

Because of the hardness of men's hearts, the quality of their marriages had not attained the original standard of measure. Most men thought of their wives as their bondservants. Their wives were as Hagar to them. That type of thinking prevails throughout the majority of history to the present day. Because of the hardness of men's hearts, God established provisions for divorce, in order that men and women would not have to endure bad marriages forever. And, we might add, God Himself knew that He would have to endure a bad marriage with Israel for many years—so this provision for divorce was for His benefit as well. Even as we ourselves ought to be able to end a bad marriage to establish a better one, so also has God done this in order to establish a better marriage covenant with us.

As for Jesus' next statement in Matt. 19:9, we covered that issue in our other book, The Bible Says: Divorce and Remarriage is NOT Adultery. The verse *seems to say* (NASB),

⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.

This poor translation has caused much misunderstanding, as if Jesus were overruling the divine law in Deut. 24:1-4. Jesus never violated the divine law nor taught against it (Matt. 5:17-19), for such teaching would have made Him the LEAST in the Kingdom. The question and answer in verses 7 and 9 actually reads this way:

⁷ Why, then, does Moses direct to give a scroll of divorce and to dismiss her?

⁹ Now I am saying to you that whoever should be dismissing his wife (not for prostitution) and should be marrying another, is committing adultery, and he who marries her who has been dismissed, is committing adultery.

The first thing that is obvious is that there are two elements to this question: the “scroll of divorce” and the actual “dismissing his wife.” The law specifies that a man may NOT dismiss his wife without giving her a written divorce (Deut. 24:1). The dismissal, then, is the act of sending the divorced wife out of the house. This law was written originally to counteract the common practice of men dismissing their wives without giving them written proof, a lawful record of their divorce. Such women often had nowhere to go, except into prostitution or (if lucky) they might marry another man.

But to marry another man without being properly (lawfully) divorced is adultery. Hence, Jesus said that if a man merely dismisses his wife and marries another is committing adultery, and the one marrying a dismissed wife (not lawfully divorced) commits adultery as well.

It is for this reason that God divorced Israel by giving her a written scroll of divorce, as we read in Jer. 3:8 (quoted earlier). He divorced Israel in a lawful manner, so that He could later remarry under new terms of a better covenant called the New Covenant. Neither divorce itself nor remarriage after divorce is a sin, for if it were, that would make God a sinner. Let us not accuse God of being a sinner. But this is the subject of our book on divorce and remarriage, so we will not repeat its contents here.

Conclusion

What God has done on a grand scale with the two covenants, He has illustrated in the persons of Hagar and Sarah and their relationship with Abram (or Abraham). The Scriptures show us that God intends to relate to mankind as a husband relates to a bride. We also see from Scripture that God is not content with having a bondwoman as a bride—even though He did establish such a relationship at the beginning under Moses. Yet we saw that marriage fail when the bride committed adultery and continuously refused to repent.

The divine plan finally came together when God committed Himself to do a work in our hearts that would turn us from Hagers to Sarahs. The Pentecostal Age was designed to teach us obedience, even as Paul claimed to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1). But God never intended to relate to us as bondservants for ever. Once we have learned obedience, He henceforth no longer calls us servants, but friends who live in harmony and unity.

No one will be called a “friend” of God without first learning obedience, for this is the path toward unity of heart and mind. Once we are in unity, we will be “one flesh” with Jesus Christ. We will do only what we see our Father do. We will say only what we hear our Father say. We will be the executors of His will in the earth until His glory fills the whole earth.

God has joined together husbands and wives in order that we might understand God’s marriage goal and put those principles into practical application. So let us not be content to remain in an Abram-Hagar relationship, but move on into perfection of the New Covenant as illustrated by Abraham and Sarah, the freewoman.