

**MARRIAGE,
THE BIBLICAL WAY**

&

**THE PAGAN TRADITIONS
IN THE WESTERN MARRIAGE
CEREMONY**

WE INFORM – YOU CHOOSE

PROFESSOR WA LIEBENBERG

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By

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Preface

YHWH "God" has called us to do two things. First, we are to never give up studying and seeking the correct interpretation of any given Bible passage. Second, such opportunities are golden moments for us to learn to show grace and love to others whose understanding of a given passage may differ from ours.

Throughout the HRTI's teachings, we use a slightly different vocabulary to that which some might be accustomed. We have chosen to use what many refer to as a Messianic vocabulary. The reasons being: Firstly, using Hebraic-sounding words is another way to help you associate with the Hebraic Roots of your faith. Secondly, these words are not merely an outward show for us, they are truly an expression of who we are as Messianic Jews and Gentiles who have "taken hold" of our inheritance with Israel.

Instead of saying "Jesus," we call our Saviour "Y'shua," the way His parents would have addressed Him in Hebrew. In addition, rather than referring to Y'shua as "Christ," we use the word "Messiah," which is an Anglicized version of the Hebrew word, Moshiach.

"Yahovah" is the name of God in Hebrew, where it is written as four consonants (YHWH or YHVH, as the W and V is derived from the same Hebrew letter 'Vaw'). These four letters are called the Tetragrammaton (Greek for "[a word] having four letters"). Jews ceased to use the name in the Greco-Roman period, replacing it with the common noun Elohim, "God," to demonstrate the universal sovereignty of Israel's God over all others; at the same time, the divine name was increasingly regarded as too sacred to be uttered, and was replaced in spoken ritual by the word Adonai ("My Lord"). From about the 6th to the 10th century the Masoretes, Jewish scholars who were the first to add vowels to the text of the Hebrew Bible, used the vowel signs of the Hebrew words Adonai or Elohim as the vowels for YHWH, and later on the artificial name Jehovah was produced. Christian scholars and translators after the Renaissance and Reformation periods replaced the sacred name YHWH with GOD and LORD (all in capital letters in the Bible); which was a strategic move of Satan as to not using the Name. The Sacred Name occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew text of the Bible, proving YHWH wants us to use it.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, biblical scholars again began to use the form Yahweh; and it is now the conventional usage in biblical scholarship, but leading Hebrew Scholars suggest YHWH should be pronounced as YaH-oo-VaH. (Y'shua is derived from YaH-shuvah which means YaH saves).

Part 1 – YHWH's biblical way of marriage

Introduction

A Christian marriage is a covenant relationship, not a contract on a piece of paper. Westerners today see marriage only when the contract is signed. Is this the way YHWH designed it? The symbols of YHWH's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 is not in agreement with the "western" wedding tradition of today, due to ignorance and not understanding Scripture from a Hebraic perspective.

Those who live in the modern western world do not realize the full significance of YHWH's way of marriage--the true Biblical way. It is an undeniable fact that many pagan traditions entered the church, especially during the dark ages (this will be proven later in this study), and very few Biblical or Hebrew traditions of the early Church, the Church of Acts, remained. Biblical marriage customs, therefore, must be examined by the westerner using "Hebrew tools" to grasp the significance of YHWH's ordained marriage.

Background

In Israel, the practice was to marry within the tribe--and if that was not possible, then within the larger tribal confederation¹. Marriages were often arranged, and that is well known. Yet these arrangements were not devoid of love².

The marriage was official when the engagement took place. *"There was **no religious rite** that was performed with the **concluding of the betrothal**, although there was a feast (meal) at the conclusion of the festivities (Gen 29:27, Jud 14:10)"³. "A **betrothed woman** was, in the eyes of the people, **legally married**. When the marriage itself was consummated, the husband received the wife (Gen 24:67) and the family of the wife received a "dowry"⁴. This payment was made because the wife's family had given their flesh and blood; therefore, the husband's family was bound to gifts in order to maintain balance between the families. "The payment of the "mohar" (dowry) was simply compensation*

¹ Num 36:10 ff

² Gen 21:21, Jud 14:3, I Sam 18:17

³ Preuss, H.D. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 104

⁴ Pedersen, Johannes. *Israel: Its life and Culture*, Vol. 1, p. 68

for the loss of the daughter's labour and should not be considered as a wedding gift"⁵.

"Within the family circle, the husband was the "lord"⁶ while the wife was expected to "help" him by providing the family with children"⁷. The will of the husband was binding on the whole family. If the wife wished to express her wishes in contradistinction to the husband, she had to do so slyly (as illustrated in the stories of Rebecca (with Isaac) and Abigail (with Nabal).

With that as background, if you fully want to understand the biblical way of marriage, then it is vital for you to understand the Hebrew Blood Covenant.

The Hebrew Blood Covenant

The Hebrew word for covenant is *berith*, which comes from the root meaning "to cut."⁸ A blood covenant was a formal, solemn, and binding agreement—a vow or pledge—between two parties made by "cutting" or dividing of animals into two parts. As we look into the details of a covenant, we'll consider the significance of the Hebrew Wedding Tradition.

In Gen 15:9-10, the blood covenant began with the sacrifice of animals. After splitting them precisely in half, the animal halves were arranged opposite each other on the ground, leaving a pathway between them. The two parties making the covenant would walk from either end of the path, meeting in the middle of the blood.

The meeting ground between the animal pieces was regarded as holy ground. There the two individuals would cut the palms of their right hands and then join these hands together as they mutually pledged a vow, promising all of their rights, possessions, and benefits to the other. Next, the two would exchange their belt and outer coat, and in so doing, take some part of the other person's name.

Now many will ask, what does the Hebrew Blood Covenant got to do with getting married. Well the answer is...everything! We will observe some of the covenant symbols in the Biblical wedding tradition. But before we do that, I want to share this "headache" verse in the New Covenant with you.

⁵ Preuss, H.D. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 104

⁶ Gen 18:12

⁷ Pedersen, Johannes. *Israel: Its life and Culture*, Vol. 1, p. 69

⁸ Easton's Bible Dictionary

The headache verse

The following verse taught by the great scholar, Rabbi Sha'ul (Paul), in the New Covenant is frowned upon, and conveniently ignored ...

“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin⁹, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.”¹⁰

Let's now read it again, this time from the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible to get the **literal** meaning:

“But if anyone thinks it **behaving indecently toward his virgin** (if she is beyond her prime, and so it ought to be), **let him do what he desires; he does not sin**; let them marry.”

The plain and literal meaning of this verse, if I can put it bluntly, says: *“If you have intercourse (sex) with a woman and she is, for example, at the age to get a vehicle license (accepted as mature by governmental legislation), then the man does not sin if he has intercourse with her, but he is then compelled to make her formally his by giving her a katubah (a written contract).”*

Yes, it was a shocker for me as well! Amazingly, Rabbi Shaul is strictly teaching what YHWH already ordained in the Old Covenant.

In Genesis 24, Abraham's servant (a type of the Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit) went to get a wife for Isaac (Type of Messiah). He found her after a prolonged surge and brought her to Isaac. Isaac, at this point, saw her for the first time and he took her into his mother Sarah's tent and had intercourse with her:

“And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took **Rebekah**, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”¹¹

⁹ Παρθένος “parthenos” Of unknown origin; a *maiden*; by implication an unmarried *daughter*: - virgin. Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries.

¹⁰ 1 Cor 7:36 KJV

¹¹ Gen 24:67 KJV

Let's now read it from verse 64 from the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, once again to get the literal meaning:

⁶⁴ *And Rebekah lifted her eyes and she saw Isaac. And she dismounted from the camel.*

⁶⁵ *And she said to the slave, Who is this man walking in the field to meet us? And the slave said, It is my master. And she took the veil and covered herself.*

⁶⁶ *And the slave told Isaac all the things that he had done.*

⁶⁷ *And Isaac brought her **into the tent** of his mother Sarah. And **he took Rebekah**, and she became his wife; and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother.*

To prove the point, let's look what Jacob did and also one of the Patriarchs:

²² *And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, **and made a feast*** (it was the custom to feast for seven days whilst the groom and bride consummated the marriage inside a chupah¹²).

²³ *And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him (Jacob); and **he went in unto her*** (into the chupah, not knowing it was Leah).

²⁴ *And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.*

²⁵ *And it came to pass, that **in the morning**, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? **wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?***¹³

Jacob, during the entire night till the morning, thought he had intercourse with Rachel and not Leah. He was shocked to find it was Leah, and because he had intercourse with Leah, he knew that Leah had become his wife solely due to the intercourse act. The drinking of wine and no lights inside the tent greatly assisted the incident to happen. Logically reasoning, do you for one second think that Jacob would not have recognized Rachel's voice under normal circumstances?

¹² A Honeymoon suite – can be a tent or building at the fathers house

¹³ Gen 29:22-25

You must understand how YHWH ordained people to get married in the Original Covenant¹⁴ ...there were no church ceremonies like we have today. You will not find one verse in the entire Bible on the “Western” way of getting married. Prove me wrong on it. YHWH's way was short and to the point. A *Ketubah*¹⁵ was presented to the bride and her father. If the *Katubah* was acceptable to them, and the bride price was paid, a feast for seven days was arranged¹⁶. On the first night of the festival activities, the groom would go into the *chupah* of the bride and consummate the marriage.

That is why Laban told Jacob ***“Fulfill her week*** (the seven days of the honeymoon with her), *and we will give thee this (Rachel) also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.*”¹⁷ This was YHWH's ordained way on how Believers got married **till tradition came in and worked folly amongst men**. This is why Y'shua said distinctly ***“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment (Torah) of God by your tradition?”***¹⁸ Also in Mark 7:9 ***“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God (Torah), that ye may keep your own tradition.”*** Anything else besides YHWH's literal Word is man's tradition and not found in the Word. Beloved friend, never judge other people's motives; and if you judge, judge with a righteous judgment – ***“Judge not according to the appearance*** (what you think other people's motives are according to your tradition), ***but judge righteous judgment.***”¹⁹

Sexual activity is understood to be a natural part of marriage;²⁰ in fact, it is the core that seals the marriage before YHWH and not the words “I do” that get said in some church. At the very best today, the exchanging of the vows during a wedding ceremony can perhaps be seen as the vocalization of **a *Ketubah***, but personally I can't even compare the two, as the Ketubah is presented at the daughter's father's house for agreement for his daughter. We know for a fact there was no ceremony between Abraham's

¹⁴ Better name for the Old Covenant (OT). There is and Original Covenant and a Improved Covenant (NT). It is the same covenant that has been improved

¹⁵ Written contract, literally meaning “that which is written”. On this contract was the bride price (in Jacob's case he worked seven years for Laban's daughter), the rights of the bride and the promises to the bride

¹⁶ Jud 14:10

¹⁷ Gen 29:27

¹⁸ Mat 15:3

¹⁹ John 7:24

²⁰ Exod 21:10: ***“If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.”*** Heb 13:4 ***“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”***

son Isaac and Rebekah in Gen 24:67, as well as between his grandson Jacob and Leah, and we should do as what Abraham did "[we are to] *follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised* (while he was still a Gentile)."²¹ Clearly, the examples of marriage in the Original Covenant is at the point when intercourse happened, when the marriage was seen consummated by YHWH. This was the act that ensured commitment by both biblical Believers. That is why Jacob could not leave Leah.

Strictly speaking, Isaac and Rebecca's marriage compared to man's current traditional way of marriage, today's church standard of getting married is viewed as a "common-law marriage"? One online encyclopedia defines common-law marriage as follows:

*"Common-law marriage, sometimes referred to as informal marriage, is a form of interpersonal status in which a man and a woman **are legally married**. The common-law marriage is a **verbal** or written **contract** between a man and a woman **to be married**, usually without a ceremony or license. A common-law marriage can only be dissolved by petitioning a court for a divorce. Common-law marriage is very similar, but distinguishable from civil unions or non-marital relationship contracts." Webster's New College Dictionary defines common-law marriage as follows: "A marriage existing by **mutual agreement and cohabitation between a man and a woman without a civil or religious ceremony**."*

You got it, according by definition to Christian tradition Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah (not to mention the others) all had "common-law marriage", correct? But in YHWH's eyes it was perfectly okay to get married this way as there was no other way except for paganism rituals.

For most countries that recognize common-law marriage such as Isaac and Rebecca's, the requirements vary but usually consist of:

- 1) capacity to marry (not being involved in any other marriage or underage)
- 2) mutually expressed desire (either verbal or written) to marry

²¹ Rom 4:12

3) a public expressing to others of that desire by referring to themselves as “Mr. and Mrs. ...,” etc., and

4) continually cohabiting.

Thus, marriage is the union of a man and a woman, creating a new entity, a new “whole” (one flesh). This union is brought about by a **mutual commitment before YHWH** to forsake all other partners, to keep themselves only unto their new partner, to act in the best interest of the other (to love); and to seek to fulfill YHWH's purposes for their lives as a new unit. This commitment is to last as long as they both shall live. Let's now read 1 Cor 7:33-39 again:

³⁶ *“But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry (make the commitment before YHWH).*

³⁷ *Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.*

³⁸ *So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*

³⁹ ***The wife is bound by the law (Torah) as long as her husband liveth (after the commitment before YHWH); but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.***²² (Emphasis mine)

Getting back to the Hebrew Blood Covenant. In the Bible, in fact in the last Book that closes the Old Covenant (Malachi), you find the word 'covenant' used in direct relationship to marriage. *“Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife **by covenant.***²³

As Malachi is the one book that uses the term 'covenant' in a direct tie to marriage, it is interesting to note that the Old Covenant opens and closes with scenes of the marriage covenant. Furthermore, the first marriage is between Adam and Eve. The last marriage is between Messiah Y'shua and His Bride in Revelation, and these two marriage scenes tell the story of

²² 1 Cor 7:36-39 KJV

²³ Mal 2:14 KJV

redemption. And so we have a Bible that wraps itself around the marriage covenant.

Marriage is a covenant and much more. The biblical marriage is a divine picture of Messiah and His Bride. Part of our modern day problem is that we have drifted far from YHWH's program for marriage. But this problem did not begin yesterday. It reaches far, far back to when the church began to lose her Biblical moorings, and began to take on a Latin-Greek mind set.

For example, where the Bible teaches the goodness of marriage, the Latin-based church began to take on the idea that marriage was in itself a distraction from a deeper walk with God. The result was monasticism and the eventual requirement of a celibate priesthood. The problem with this picture is that celibacy is never portrayed in the Scriptures as YHWH's best for a deeper spiritual life. In fact, one of the basic requirements to be a Pastor is that the man had to be married.

The truth of the matter is that marriage itself relates to things that are deeply spiritual. This means that there are certain things that cannot be discovered in a celibate life style. But the only way to make a marriage work in its spiritual expressions is to return to its Biblical foundation. (This is not an affront against someone who has the gift of celibacy. This gift is from the Lord.)

YHWH said that it was not good for man to be alone. And the very first commandment given to man and woman in the Scripture is, *"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it."*²⁴

Most assuredly, marriage is the most sacred of covenants. In fact, the Hebrew word for marriage and the Hebrew word for holiness is the same word: *kiddushin*.

Marriage is the only covenant in the Bible that allows two people to be perfectly joined in all areas of life, from the physical to the spiritual. Where else but in marriage can we find such sacredness and dignity placed together?

Now let's consider some of the mystical side of marriage along with YHWH's ideal. In the very first marriage, which will always be YHWH's ideal for marriage, we find YHWH presenting Eve to Adam. Does it not say that, *"House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord."*²⁵

²⁴ Gen 1:28

²⁵ Prov 19:14

For the mystical side, we have this truth that the “Church” (Assembly) is a gift of the Father to the Son. When Y’shua came out of the overshadowing of the cross, He saw His bride. Y’shua said, *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”*²⁶

When Eve is presented before Adam, we hear Adam say, *“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.”*²⁷ Adam’s role was to draw Eve to himself. Adam’s role was to drive Eve’s fears away. Adam’s role was to let her know his love and his protection, that she was now sanctified to him. On the mystical side, this is what Y’shua does for the Church. On the marriage side, this is what men are to do for their wives.

Paul said, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.”*²⁸

This statement by Rabbi Paul shows us why YHWH will not bless a man who mistreats his wife. Every woman is designed to be a gift to some man. But she is ultimately a gift from the Lord. The gift is to be cherished, loved, and cared for. This is covenant. Two lives become one. And while it seems we are putting the greater responsibility on the man, this is because he has the greater responsibility. YHWH designed the woman to be weaker in some things, so that she could fit the marriage in her proper role.

To take this a step further, can the marriage covenant be considered a blood covenant? There are various covenants given throughout the Bible, and not all of them are blood covenants. Again, we see the mystical side of marriage. God gave the woman a hymen that was designed to be broken in the first act of intercourse. There is the letting of blood in the breaking of the hymen. Thus the Lord built into marriage the “blood covenant”. In the same sense as the animal is cut into two pieces and you stand in-between the bloody halves; so it is when the man penetrates the woman during intercourse. The exact moment the man penetrates the

²⁶ John 6:37

²⁷ Gen 2:23

²⁸ Eph 5:25-28

woman, they are legally married to each other, because the covenant has been cut. That is why sex outside the marriage is against YHWH's Word.

In closing, there is one more picture to be seen. This ancient marriage covenant had two parts. They were called '*kiddushin*' and '*nissuin*'. *Kiddushin* was the betrothal of the woman to the man when the *Ketubah* was agreed by the father of the bride. Today we call this the engagement period. For the ancients, it had a much deeper spiritual significance. The woman was considered married but had not yet been taken to the husband's home.

This is the stage of marriage that the church is in with regard to Y'shua. Rabbi Paul said, *"For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that in Messiah I might present you as a pure virgin."*²⁹

Rabbi Paul was speaking as a Hebrew man, and had the ancient Hebrew marriage in mind. For the Hebrew people, the completed marriage was called *nissuin*. *Nissuin* speaks of elevation, or the lifting up. This is at best the Christian's interpretation of the symbolic 'lifting of the veil', and even the 'carrying of the bride over the threshold'. For the Church, the *nissuin* takes place at the Second Coming of Y'shua.

Y'shua uses these two aspects of the ancient marriage in His sharing with the disciples in John 14, where He says, *"In My father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."*³⁰

Yes, biblical marriage is indeed a covenant, a Hebrew Blood Covenant.

YHWH's purposes for marriage

Some of YHWH's purposes for marriage as stated in the Bible are ***companionship***,³¹ ***procreation***,³² ***mutual and undefiled pleasure***,³³ ***prevention of immorality***,³⁴ the ***serving of Messiah Y'shua as a whole***

²⁹ 2 Cor 11:2

³⁰ John 14:2, 3

³¹ Gen 2:18

³² Gen 1:28

³³ 1 Cor 7:4-5; Prov 5:18-19; Song of Solomon and Heb 13:4

³⁴ 1 Cor 7:2, 5

and ***properly representing the spiritual relationship between Y'shua and the Church;***³⁵ and ***the raising of godly descendants.***³⁶

Facts Established

- Marriages throughout biblical history **did not involve some type of public ritual ceremony** except for the presenting of the *Ketubah* (engagement/betrothal) and the actual festival for the seven days.
- A ritual ceremony **is not required for a biblical marriage** to have taken place.
- In the case of Isaac and Rebecca and others, **no ritual ceremony is recorded whatsoever.**
- A common ingredient between today's "common-law marriage" and the biblical one is a **publicly expressed intent to be married.** (The *Ketubah* at engagement was the biblical way; the engagement ring could represent that today, although it is not biblical).
- Two people living together without that expressed commitment **does not constitute a common-law marriage**, just cohabitation.
- Isaac and Rebecca and Jacob and Leah did not just begin living together, there was a **clear expression of intent** that their union would be of a **permanent nature** via *Ketubahs* that were presented to the bride's fathers. (Unfortunately, Jacob was deceived by Laban as the *Ketubah* was meant for Rachel and not Leah).
- Another ingredient in these biblical marriages which did not involve a public ceremony is that there was **no sexual activity** prior to their marriage, meaning the commitment came first.

Conclusion

The bond of marriage (when respected) leads to the good of not only the couple and their children, but also to the good of the society as a whole, for the family unit is the building block of any society.

The Bible states that Believers are to "*provide things honest in the sight of all men,*"³⁷ it is important that their marriage do the same. Common-law marriage has a connotation in most Westerner's eyes as being less-than-honourable, **due to ignorance or not accepting a Hebrew approach/understanding to Scripture.** It should therefore be a Believer's desire to live above reproach so that Messiah Y'shua can be honoured in all that

³⁵ Eph 5:22-33

³⁶ Mal 2:13-16

³⁷ 2 Cor 8:21; Rom 12:17

he/she does.³⁸ For this reason, I strongly suggest individuals involved in common-law marriage should commit themselves also to a public wedding ceremony at some stage with a good testimony for Y'shua and a good presentation of YHWH's Word.

Part 2 – Some Pagan traditions in the Wedding of the Western way (note that not all are pagan)

The wedding is one of life's primeval and surprisingly unchanged rites of passage. Nearly all of the customs we observe today are merely echoes of the past. Ironically, many of the rituals being performed by devout Christians in a Christian church and ceremony are essentially based on Pagan beliefs. Everything from the veil, rice, flowers, and old shoes, to the bridesmaids and processional, at one time bore a very specific and vitally significant meaning. Today, although the original substance is often lost, the western world still incorporates old world customs into their weddings because the Church in general is so traditional.

Old world marriage customs continue to thrive today, in diluted, disguised and often upgraded forms. Customs memorialized today were once "brand new" ideas. Although historical accuracy is hard to achieve, the historical weight attached to old world wedding customs and traditions is immense.

The Bride's Veil

The bride's veil and bouquet are of greater antiquity than her white gown. Her veil, which was yellow in ancient Greece and red in ancient Rome, usually shrouded her from head to foot, and has since the earliest of times, denoted the subordination of a woman to a man. The thicker the veil, the more traditional the implication of wearing it.

According to tradition, it is considered bad luck for the bride to be seen by the groom before the ceremony. As a matter of fact, in the old days of marriage by purchase, the couple rarely saw each other at all, with courtship being of more recent historical emergence.

In addition to the groom not being allowed to see the bride before the ceremony, the veil was also used to protect the bride from being seen by evil spirits and jealous suitors. To this day, it is considered bad luck for the groom to see the bride on her wedding day before the ceremony.

³⁸ I Cor 10:31

The Bride's Handkerchief

Early farmers thought a bride's wedding day tears were lucky and brought rains for their crops. Later, a crying bride meant that she'd never shed another tear about her marriage. Today, they carry a handkerchief to dab away the tears of happiness and joy.

The Honeymoon

In ancient times, many of the first marriages were by capture, not choice. When early man felt it was time to take a bride, he would often carry off an unwilling woman to a secret place where her relatives wouldn't find them. While the moon went through all its phases, (about 30 days) they hid from the searchers and drank a brew made from honey. Hence, we get the word, honeymoon.

Why Do the Attendants Dress Alike?

Who hasn't noticed that the maids, ushers, and entire bridal party dress very much like the bride and groom? It was once common for the bride, her groom and all their friends to walk together to the church on the morning of the wedding afraid that someone, maybe a rejected suitor, would spot the happy couple and put a curse on them. The groom's friends wore clothes almost identical to his, and the women costumed themselves like the bride. These disguises tricked evil wishers into letting the real bride and groom live happily ever after.

The Blue Satin Garter

Why this "Something Blue?" In ancient times, brides wore a blue ribbon to signify "fidelity." The garter-throwing itself derives from a bawdy ritual called "flinging the stocking." In Britain, the guests would playfully invade the bridal chamber. The ushers grabbed the bride's stockings; the maids; the grooms. They took turns sitting at the foot of the bed flinging the stockings over the heads of the couple. Whoever's stocking landed on the bride's or the groom's nose would be the next to wed.

Today, many brides will wear two garters. The one she wishes to keep as a memento of her wedding day, possibly to be displayed on her groom's rear view mirror; and another, to be retrieved and tossed by the groom to all the young unmarried men attending the event. The "garter toss" is likely to be in the colour of the wedding, and not as elaborate as the more decorative garters kept by the bride.

The Trousseau

The word trousseau came from the French word, trousse, which meant bundle. The trousseau originated as a bundle of clothing and personal possessions the bride carried with her to her new home. This was later expanded upon into a generous dowry. Today, the trousseau includes all of the new items for the household, as well as for the bride herself.

Why does the Bride Wear White?

The colour white has been a symbol of joyous celebration since early Roman times. At the beginning to the twentieth century, white stood for purity as well. Today, it holds its original meaning of happiness and joy.

The Bride Carries Flowers and the Tossing of the Bouquet

For centuries, flowers have stood for a variety of emotions and values: roses for love, lilies for virtue and so on. In ancient marriages, the brides carried herbs beneath their veils to symbolize fidelity. Greek brides carried ivy as a symbol of never-ending love. Orange blossoms, (the world renowned wedding flower) were chosen by the Spaniards to represent happiness and fulfillment, because the orange tree flowers and bears fruit at the same time. During even earlier times of "primitive marriage," when the fear of demons was most prevalent, the brides carried stinking garlands of herbs and spices for the purpose of frightening off evil spirits.

Flowers were also incorporated into the ceremony because they represent fertility, purity, new life and never ending love. Traditionally, bouquets were a mixture of flowers and herbs. Dill was a very popular choice as an herb because it was believed to promote lust. Following the ceremony, the dill was eaten for that purpose.

Tossing of the bridal bouquet is a custom which has its roots in England. It was believed that the bride could pass along good fortune to others. In order to obtain this fortune, spectators would try to tear away pieces of the bride's clothing and flowers. In an attempt to get away, the bride would toss her bouquet into the crowd. Tradition says that the single woman who catches the bouquet is the one who receives the bride's fortune and will marry next.

The Wedding Cake

Beginning in early Roman times, the cake has been a special part of the wedding celebration. A thin loaf was broken over the bride's head at the close of the ceremony to symbolize fertility. The wheat from which it was made, symbolized fertility and the guests eagerly picked up the crumbs as good luck charms. During the Middle Ages, it became traditional for the couple to kiss over a small cluster of cakes. Later, a clever baker decided

to amass all these small cakes together, covering them with frosting. Thus, the modern tiered cake was born.

The Tradition of the Bridal Shower

Tradition says that the first bridal shower was given to a poor couple in Holland who was denied the bridal dowry because of the groom's lowly miller status. The miller's friends showered the bride with gifts to help them set up housekeeping.

Why Carry the Bride Across the Threshold?

During the days of "Marriage by Capture", the bride was certainly not going to go peacefully into the bridegroom's abode; thus, she was dragged or carried across the threshold. In even earlier times, it was believed that family demons followed the woman and to keep her family demons from going into the groom's home, she was carried across the threshold upon her entering for the first time. After that, the demons could not enter as she would come in and go out of the home.

Why Old Shoes, Flowers and Rice?

The throwing of rice on the couple has always been symbolic of wishing prosperity and good luck, and to bless them with fertility. In the Orient, throwing rice means, "May you always have a full pantry." Wheat and other grains are sometimes thrown in addition to rice, thereby also wishing prosperity and lack of want. Each shower bestows "Goodwill Traditions" of wealth upon the newlyweds. To this day, rice remains a token of a life of "plenty."

When rose pedals are thrown before the bride as she walks down the aisle, it is to ward-off evil spirits below the ground and grant fertility.

Giving the Bride Away

In times when women were granted few privileges and even fewer personal rights, the bride was literally given away to the groom by the father, usually in exchange for monetary gain. Today, it is seen as symbolic of the blessings and support of her union as a promise of continued trust and affection. Often when the question is asked by a clergy during the ceremony, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man," the father's response is, "Her mother and I."

Why an Engagement Ring?

In the early days of "Marriage by Purchase," the betrothal ring served a twofold purpose. This twofold purpose included partial payment for the bride and was a symbol of the groom's honourable intentions. The diamond was found first in Medieval Italy, and because of its hardness, was chosen to stand for enduring love.

Why the Third Finger, Left-hand?

In ancient times, it was believed there was a vein in the third finger of the left hand that ran directly to the heart. Thus, the ring being placed on that finger, denoted the strong connection of a heartfelt love and commitment to one another. Although during times of modern autopsy, and this long held belief was found not to be so, the tradition has continued to this day.

Medieval bridegrooms placed the ring on three of the bride's fingers, in turn, to symbolize the "Roman Catholic Trinity" (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit). The ring then remained on the third finger and has become the customary ring finger for English-speaking cultures. In some European countries, the ring is worn on the left hand before marriage, and is moved to the right hand during the ceremony. However, in most European countries the ring is still worn on the bride's left hand. A Greek Orthodox bride wears her ring on her left hand before marriage, and moves it to her right hand after the ceremony.

Why a Wedding Ring?

The circular shape of the wedding ring has symbolized undying, unending love since the days of the early Egyptians. A primitive bride wore a ring of hemp or rushes, which had to be replaced often. Durable iron was used by the Romans to symbolize the permanence of marriage. Today's favourite is of course, gold, with its lasting qualities of beauty and purity.

The Best Man

During ancient times when women were in short supply, the groom captured his bride-to-be from a neighboring village. The future bridegroom, accompanied by a male companion, seized any young girl who had strayed from the safety of her parental home. The custom of a "best man" is a relic of that two-man, strong-armed tactic; for such an important task, only the best man would do.

A best man around AD 200 carried more than a ring. Since there remained the real threat of the bride's family attempting to forcibly gain her return, the best man stayed by the groom's side throughout the marriage ceremony, alert and armed. He also might serve as a sentry outside the

newlyweds' home. Of course, much of this is German folklore, but it is not without written documentation and physical artifacts. For instance, the threat of recapture by the bride's family was perceived as so genuine that beneath the church altars of many early peoples - including the Huns, the Goths, the Visigoths, and the Vandals - lay an arsenal of clubs, knives, and spears.

The Bells, Stag and Hen Parties

Bells were originally rung at weddings to frighten away the evil spirits, and noisy celebrations were held beforehand to try and drive them from the community. These were the ancestors of the stag and hen parties.

The Bachelor Party

The rowdy bachelor parties were the invention of the Spartan Soldiers. It became customary for the groom to feast with his friends the night before the wedding, often celebrating his last night of freedom by getting severely drunk (not much has changed, it seems). In modern times, women have decided they also want their night of fun, so now it is traditional for women to have Stagette or Bachelorette parties as well.

The Wedding Kiss

The Wedding Kiss dates back to Roman times. The kiss was to seal the marriage legally between the couple and must be witnessed by another person.

Tie the Knot

The expression "tie the knot" comes from Roman times when the bride wore a girdle that was tied in knots which the groom had the fun of untying.

Wedding Banns

This is an announcement of an impending wedding in the Catholic Church. This announcement usually takes place for three consecutive Sundays. Its purpose was to inform the public with enough notice of the pending wedding so if anyone objected to the marriage, they could do so.

Wedding March

The traditional church wedding features two bridal marches, by two different classical composers. The bride walks down the aisle to the majestic, moderately paced music of the "Bridal Chorus" from Richard Wagner's 1848 opera "Lohengrin. The newlyweds exit to the more jubilant, upbeat strains of the "Wedding March" from Felix Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

The custom dates back to the royal marriage in 1858, of Victoria, princess of Great Britain and Empress of Germany to Prince Frederick William of Prussia. Victoria, eldest daughter of Britain's Queen Victoria, selected the music herself. A patron of the arts, she valued the works of Mendelssohn and practically venerated those of Wagner. Given the British penchant for copying the monarchy, soon brides throughout the Isles, nobility and commoner alike, were marching to Victoria's drummer, establishing a Western wedding tradition.

Why the Bride Stands on the Left

During the marriage ceremony, the bride stands on the left and the groom on the right. The origin of this goes back to the days when a groom would capture his bride by kidnapping her. If the groom had to fight off other men who also wanted her as their bride, he would hold his bride-to-be with his left hand allowing his right hand to be free to use his sword.

Taking of each other's Right Hand

The open right hand is a symbol of strength, resource and purpose. The coming together of both right hands is a symbol that both the bride and the groom can depend on each other and the resources that each brings to the marriage. It also represents the merger of their lives together into one.

Unity Candle

The unity candle is a symbol of family unity. Usually a single candle (representing the newly married couple) is lit with two individual candles, each representing the bride's and groom's families.

Arch of Swords following Ceremony

Walking through the arc of swords following the ceremony was done to ensure the couple's safe passage into their new life together.

First on the Dance Floor

At the evening celebrations, the bride and groom traditionally dance first on their own to a waltz. However, as ballroom dancing is not so popular these days, the newlyweds usually dance to a favorite romantic song. During the playing of this song, it is traditional for the couple to dance the complete song alone. After the first dance, the bride and her father or brother dance followed by the groom and his mother.

Signing of the Guest Book

The signing of the marriage certificate documents a public record of the marriage. The guest book was a record of all people who witnessed the

wedding. For that reason, the guest book is supposed to be signed following the official wedding ceremony.

Throwing Confetti

Throwing confetti over newly weds originated from the ancient Pagan rite of showering the happy couple with grain to wish upon them a 'fruitful' union. Pagans believed that the fertility of the seeds would be transferred to the couple on whom they fell. The throwing of rice has the same symbolic meaning.

The word confetti has the same root as the word confectionery in Italian and was used to describe 'sweetmeats' that is, grain and nuts coated in sugar that were thrown over newly weds for the same Pagan reason. In recent years, small pieces of coloured paper have replaced sweetmeats, grain and nuts as an inexpensive substitute but the use of the word confetti has remained.

The Grand Exit after the Reception and Shoes tied to Bumper

Traditionally, old shoes were tied to the back of the car to represent the transfer of property from the father of the bride to the groom. Horn honking, the shooting off of firecrackers and ringing of bells were a means to protect the bride by warding off evil spirits.

In more detail, the tying shoes to the bumper of the car represents the symbolism and power of shoes in ancient times. Egyptians would exchange sandals when they exchanged goods, so when the father of the bride gave his daughter to the groom, he would also give the bride's sandals to show that she now belonged to the groom. In Anglo Saxon times, the groom would tap the heel of the bride's shoe to show his authority over her. In later times, people would throw shoes at the couple, and now they just tie shoes to their car.

Shivare

This custom dates back from the Middle Ages. A group of friends would gather and bang on pots and pans, shoot off guns, etc. to disturb the newlywed couple on their wedding night.

In conclusion

From the Scripture we can see that YHWH wants an intimate relationship between a man and his wife which is sealed by 'cutting the covenant'.

In the Torah, the word used for sex between **husband and wife** comes from the root ידע (Yod-Dalet-Ayin), meaning "to know," which vividly

illustrates that **proper Jewish sexuality** involves **both the heart and mind**, not merely the body.

The following piece was taken from an Orthodox Jewish Website...

*"Nevertheless, Judaism **does not ignore** the physical component of sexuality. The need for physical **compatibility** between husband and wife is recognized in Jewish law. A Jewish couple must meet **at least once before the marriage** (ceremony), and if either prospective spouse finds the other physically repulsive, the marriage is forbidden."³⁹*

Question: Is this not what Rabbi Paul referred to in 1 Cor 7:36 *"But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and **need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.**"* You decide ...

Sex should only be experienced in a time of joy. Sex for selfish personal satisfaction, without regard for the partner's pleasure, **is wrong and evil**. A man may never force his wife to have sex. A couple may not have sexual relations while drunk or quarreling. Sex may never be used as a weapon against a spouse, either by depriving the spouse of sex or by compelling it. It is a **serious offense** to use sex (or lack thereof) to **punish or manipulate** a spouse.

The Jewish thought on sex is that sex is the woman's right, not the man's. A man has a duty to give his wife sex regularly and to ensure that sex is pleasurable for her. He is also obligated to watch for signs that his wife wants sex, and to offer it to her without her asking for it. The woman's right to sexual intercourse is referred to as *onah*, and it is one of a wife's **three basic rights** (the others are food and clothing), which a husband may not reduce.

The important thing about a Jewish way of getting married is that the *Ketubah* (the woman's marriage contract stipulating her rights) specifies both the quantity and quality of sex that a man must give his wife. The Jewish thought is that a man may not take a vow (fast for an unlimited time) to abstain from sex for an extended period of time, and may not take a journey for an extended period of time, because that would deprive his wife of sexual relations. In addition, a husband's consistent refusal to engage in sexual relations is grounds for compelling a man to divorce his wife.⁴⁰

Although sex is the woman's right, she does not have absolute discretion to withhold it from her husband. In Jewish thought, a woman may not

³⁹ <http://www.jewfaq.org/sex.htm>

⁴⁰ See the booklet on divorce for more information

withhold sex from her husband as a form of punishment; and if she does, the husband may divorce her without paying the substantial divorce settlement provided for in the *Ketubah* (also see the booklet *"All about Divorce, Grossly Incorrect been Taught! You cannot Marry after being Divorced, the biggest hogwash ever!!!"*).

With that in mind, now go and read Song of Solomon to see the beauty of what YHWH had in mind for a heterosexual relationship between a man and his wife.

After reading most of the traditions (of which most are pagan) and where they originate from, I realized that there is indeed an occultic invasion in the Church. I challenge the reader to find any one of these traditions in YHWH's Word as His procedure for getting married. Let me spare you the time, you will not find any in the Bible; yet many Christians are quick to slam a biblical common-law marriage such as Isaac's and Rebecca's! Y'shua warned us against this mindset: *"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."*⁴¹

Although we realize that most of the Christian's Wedding Ceremony roots are pagan, we still follow it due to our persistent tradition! To take it even further, the general Christian is also oblivious to the fact of YHWH's ordained common-law marriages, but they are quick to denounce the common-law marriage covenant because of being so caught up in their pagan traditions and mindset.

As I started off with this teaching, I said we are to never give up studying and seeking the correct interpretation of any given Bible passage, because such opportunities are golden moments for us to learn to show grace and love to others whose understanding of a given passage may differ from ours.

Let us study the Word of YHWH with unrestrained effort to get to the truth, so as to ensure Satan does not rob us of our blessings.

We inform – You choose⁴²

Never be guilty of: ***"By your traditions you make the Word of God of non effect"***⁴³

⁴¹ Mat 15:6

⁴² The truth of the Torah makes you see the mistranslations in the New Covenant. It's amazing how you can look at the epistles of Rabbi Paul one way and it looks like he's leading the body of Messiah away from Torah, when in reality, he's leading them **to** Torah. A paradox of vantage point. Let us remember, the intent of the law maker constitutes the law. We need to walk a mile or two in our Hebrew Messiah's shoes

⁴³ **Mat 15:3** *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?* **Mat 15:6** *And honour not his father or his mother, he*

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Proverbs 25:25

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