

~ENGAGEMENT (432)

.. The Bride Of Christ

- The **mutual promise for a future marriage**. Among the Hebrews the negotiations involved usually depended on the parents of the couple, particularly the fathers.
- Now Abraham was old, advanced in years, and Yehowah had blessed Abraham in everything. (**Genesis 24:1**)
- Hence Abraham said to his servant, the oldest one of his household, who was managing all he had. Put your hand, please, under my thigh. (**Genesis 24:2**)
- As I must have you swear by Yehowah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in among whom I am dwelling. (**Genesis 24:3**)
- But you will go to my country and to my relatives, and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac. (**Genesis 24:4**)
- In time Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. (**Genesis 38:6**)
- And he took up dwelling in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother proceeded to take a wife for him from the land of Egypt. (**Genesis 21:21**)
- The young man's wishes in the matter were often considered.
- So he went up and told his father and his mother and said; There is a woman that I have seen in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines, and now get her for me as a wife. (**Judges 14:2**)
- In the case of girls who inherited the ancestral property because their father had died without sons, they could become wives to whomever it was fit in their eyes, as long as they married within their tribe.
- This is the word that Yehowah has commanded for the daughters of Zelophehad, saying; To whom it is good in their eyes they may

become wives. Only it is to the family of the tribe of their fathers that they should become wives. (**Numbers 36:6**)

- In the case of Isaac, it was really Yehowah who selected his bride.
- Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said; **From Yehowah this thing has issued**. We are unable to speak bad or good to you. (**Genesis 24:50**)
- Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go, and let her become a wife to the son of your master, just as Yehowah has spoken. (**Genesis 24:51**)
- The selection of the bride and the proposal, usually by the parents or father of the groom, was followed by the espousal, or betrothal.
- This was a formal proceeding, handled by the parents on the part of the bride and often by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom.
- Now Abraham was old, advanced in years, and Yehowah had blessed Abraham in everything. (**Genesis 24:1**)
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- But you will go to my country and to my relatives, and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac. (**Genesis 24:4**)
- He that has the bride is the bridegroom. However, the friend of the bridegroom, when he stands and hears him, has a great deal of joy on account of the voice of the bridegroom. Therefore this joy of mine has been made full. (**John 3:29**)
- A prominent feature of the **engagement** was the *mo'har*, the bride-price. This term *mo'har* occurs three times in the Bible.

- Raise very high the **marriage money** and **gift** imposed upon me, and I stand willing to give according to what you may say to me, only give me the young woman as a wife. (**Genesis 34:12**)
- Now in case a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and he actually lies down with her, he is to obtain her without fail as his wife for the **purchase price**. (**Exodus 22:16**)
- If her father flatly refuses to give her to him, he is to pay over the money at the rate of **purchase money for virgins**. (**Exodus 22:17**)
- At that Saul said; This is what you men will say to David; The king has delight, not in marriage money, but in a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to avenge himself on the enemies of the king. But as for Saul, he had schemed to have David fall by the hand of the Philistines. (**1 Samuel 18:25**)
- The **bride-price** was usually paid to the parents. In Rebekah's case, Abraham's servant gave choice things to her mother and to her brother Laban, who took the leading part in making the arrangements.
- And the servant began to bring out articles of silver and articles of gold and garments and to give them to Rebekah, and he gave choice things to her brother and to her mother. (**Genesis 24:53**)
- The *mo'har*, could also be in the form of service.
- After that Laban said to Jacob; Are you my brother, and must you serve me for nothing? Tell me, What are your wages to be? (**Genesis 29:15**)
- As it was, Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger Rachel. (**Genesis 29:16**)
- But the eyes of Leah had no luster, whereas Rachel had become beautiful in form and beautiful of countenance. (**Genesis 29:17**)
- And Jacob was in love with Rachel. So he said; I am willing to serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter. (**Genesis 29:18**)
- To this Laban said; It is better for me to give her to you than for

me to give her to another man. Keep dwelling with me. (**Genesis 29:19**)

- And Jacob proceeded to serve seven years for Rachel, but in his eyes they proved to be like some few days because of his love for her. (**Genesis 29:20**)
- Then Jacob said to Laban; Give over my wife, because my days are up, and let me have relations with her. (**Genesis 29:21**)
- With that Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. (**Genesis 29:22**)
- But it turned out that during the evening he resorted to taking Leah his daughter and bringing her to him that he might have relations with her. (**Genesis 29:23**)
- Moreover, Laban gave to her Zilpah his maidservant, even to Leah his daughter, as a maidservant. (**Genesis 29:24**)
- So it followed in the morning that here it was Leah! Consequently he said to Laban; What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? So why have you tricked me? (**Genesis 29:25**)
- To this Laban said; It is not customary to do this way in our place, to give the younger woman before the firstborn. (**Genesis 29:26**)
- Celebrate to the full the week of this woman. After that there shall be given to you also this other woman for the service that you can serve with me for seven years more. (**Genesis 29:27**)
- Accordingly Jacob did so and celebrated fully the week of this woman, after which he gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife. (**Genesis 29:28**)
- Besides, Laban gave Bilhah his maidservant to Rachel his daughter as her maidservant. (**Genesis 29:29**)
- Then he had relations also with Rachel and also expressed more love for Rachel than for Leah, and he went serving with him for yet seven years more. (**Genesis 29:30**)

- And Caleb proceeded to say; Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and does capture it, I shall certainly give him Achsah my daughter as a wife. (**Joshua 15:16**)
- Now in case a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and he actually lies down with her, he is to obtain her without fail as his wife for the purchase price. (**Exodus 22:16**)
- If her father flatly refuses to give her to him, he is to pay over the money at the rate of purchase money for virgins. (**Exodus 22:17**)
- Shows that the *mo'har* was paid to the father of a seduced girl as indemnity for the offense committed, even if the father refused to give her in marriage. The bride was occasionally given a present by her father as a parting gift, and sometimes, as in the case of Rebekah, the bride was presented with gifts at betrothal.
- Pharaoh the king of Egypt himself had come up and then captured Gezer and burned it with fire, and the Canaanites dwelling in the city he had killed. So he gave it as a parting gift to his daughter, the wife of Solomon. (**1 Kings 9:16**)
- At that Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother, captured it. Accordingly he gave him Achsah his daughter as a wife. (**Joshua 15:17**)
- And it came about that when she was going home, she kept inciting him to ask a field from her father. Then she clapped her hands while upon the ass. At this Caleb said to her; What do you want? (**Joshua 15:18**)
- So she said; Do give me a blessing, for it is a piece of land to the south you have given me, and you must give me Gulloth-maim. Accordingly he gave her Upper Gulloth and Lower Gulloth. (**Joshua 15:19**)
- And the servant began to bring out articles of silver and articles of gold and garments and to give them to Rebekah, and he gave choice things to her brother and to her mother. (**Genesis 24:53**)
- The Hebrews viewed an engaged couple as bound and as if already married, though cohabitation did not take place until the formalities of the wedding were completed.

- Please, here I have two daughters who have never had intercourse with a man. Please, let me bring them out to you. Then do to them as is good in your eyes. Only to these men do not do a thing, because that is why they have come under the shadow of my roof. ([Genesis 19:8](#))
- Hence Lot went on out and began to speak to his sons-in-law who were to take his daughters, and he kept on saying; Get up! Get out of this place, because Yehowah is bringing the city to ruin! But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he seemed like a man who was joking. ([Genesis 19:14](#))
- Hence Lot went on out and began to speak to his sons-in-law who were to take his daughters, and he kept on saying; Get up! Get out of this place, because Yehowah is bringing the city to ruin! But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he seemed like a man who was joking. ([Genesis 19:14](#))
- Consequently Samson's wife began to weep over him and to say; You only hate me, you do, and you do not love me. There was a riddle that you propounded to the sons of my people, but to me you have not told it. At this he said to her; Why, to my own father and my own mother I have not told it, and ought I to tell it to you? ([Judges 14:16](#))
- And Samson's wife came to belong to a groomsman of his who had associated with him. ([Judges 14:20](#))
- Among the Jews the **engagement** was regarded as so binding that if the marriage should not take place because of a change of mind on the part of the bridegroom or for some justifiable reason, the young woman could not be married to another until she was freed by due process of law, that is, by a bill of divorce.
- However, Joseph her husband, because he was righteous and did not want to make her a public spectacle, intended to divorce her secretly. ([Matthew 1:19](#))
- If the engaged girl committed fornication with another man during the time of her **engagement** to her bridegroom, she was judged an adulteress and sentenced to death.
- However, Joseph her husband, because he was righteous and did

- not want to make her a public spectacle, intended to divorce her secretly. (**Matthew 1:19**)
- You must also bring them both out to the gate of that city and pelt them with stones, and they must die, the girl for the reason that she did not scream in the city, and the man for the reason that he humiliated the wife of his fellowman. So you must clear away what is evil from your midst. (**Deuteronomy 22:24**)
 - Even if a man had relations with a slave girl designated for another man but not yet redeemed, or freed, both parties were guilty and were punished. However, they were not to be put to death because she had not been set free.
 - Now in case a man lies down with a woman and has an emission of semen, when she is a maidservant designated for another man, and she has not in any way been redeemed nor has freedom been given her, punishment should take place. They should not be put to death, because she was not set free. (**Leviticus 19:20**)
 - And he must bring his guilt offering to Yehowah to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram of guilt offering. (**Leviticus 19:21**)
 - And the priest must make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before Yehowah for his sin that he committed, and his sin that he committed must be forgiven him. (**Leviticus 19:22**)
 - The **engaged** man was exempt from military duty.
 - And who is the man that has become **engaged** to a woman and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, for fear he may die in the battle and another man should take her. (**Deuteronomy 20:7**)
 - With respect to the age of **engagement**, no restrictions are pronounced in the Bible. In Middle Eastern lands today marriage often takes place after the bride reaches the age of 16 and occasionally when she is younger.
 - Talmudists forbade marriage in the case of a male who was under 13 years and one day, and in the case of a female who was under 12 years and one day.

- There generally was not a prolonged interval of years between **engagement** and marriage, although there could be times when an interval was needed so that the groom might pay the stipulated price or render the desired service.
- In the case of Jacob, the period of **engagement** was seven years, during which he served for Rachel, but was given Leah. Then he waited one week longer before receiving Rachel, although he continued to serve Laban seven years more for her.
- And Jacob proceeded to serve seven years for Rachel, but in his eyes they proved to be like some few days because of his love for her. (**Genesis 29:20**)
- Then Jacob said to Laban; Give over my wife, because my days are up, and let me have relations with her. (**Genesis 29:21**)
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- Accordingly Jacob did so and celebrated fully the week of this woman, after which he gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife. (**Genesis 29:28**)

- The Christian should consider his word of promise as binding, and in the case of a marriage **engagement** he should follow the principle expressed by Jesus;
- Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No. For what is in excess of these is from the wicked one. (**Matthew 5:37**)
- And by James; But let your Yes mean Yes, and your No, No, so that you do not fall under judgment.
- Above all things, though, my brothers, stop swearing, yes, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath. But let your Yes mean Yes, and your No, No, so that you do not fall under judgment. (**James 5:12**)

.. The Bride Of Christ

- Jesus Christ is **espoused** to a bride, the Christian congregation, which is his body.
- He also subjected all things under his feet, and made him head over all things to the congregation. (**Ephesians 1:22**)
- Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills up all things in all. (**Ephesians 1:23**)
- At Pentecost, **33 C.E.**, the first members of the bride received the Holy Spirit with its miraculous gift of tongues. This was similar to **gifts of betrothal**, constituting for the spiritual bride of Christ a token in advance of their inheritance, for the purpose of releasing by a ransom God's own possession, to his glorious praise.
- But you also hoped in him after you heard the word of truth, the Good News about your salvation. By means of him also, after you believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. (**Ephesians 1:13**)
- Which is a token in advance of our inheritance, for the purpose of releasing by a ransom God's own possession, to his glorious praise. (**Ephesians 1:14**)
- The apostle Paul spoke of those whom he had introduced to the truth about Christ and who had become Christians as promised in

marriage, and he exhorted them to maintain cleanness as a chaste virgin to the Christ.

- **For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I personally promised you in marriage to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2)**
- **But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3)**
- **Those engaged to, or promised to, the Christ are, while on earth, considered to be engaged and are invited to the evening meal of the Lambs marriage.**
- **And he tells me; Write, happy are those invited to the evening meal of the Lambs marriage. Also, he tells me; These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:9)**