

Only One Bride

In *Exodus 6:6-7*, יהוה gave Moses five promises, which He intended to carry out for Israel. Four of these promises form the basis and names for the four cups of wine at the Passover Seder. The fourth promise (*the 4th cup – the cup of intimacy*) is found in: “*I will take you {ולקחתי אתכם} velakachti etchem} to Myself as a people and I will be your God. You will know that I am Adonai (יהוה) your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:7).*” The Hebrew word used in this last promise is a verb commonly translated *to take*. However, in the *TNK* there are other times when it is used in reference to someone taking a wife. Examples in Genesis include [*Gen. 4:19, 6:2, 11:29, 12:19, 24*]. Based on this usage, it is reasonable to infer that יהוה told Israel He wanted to take them to Himself *as one takes a wife*. Thus, this was *Israel's betrothal* – the formal and legal engagement to their future Husband, יהוה!

Yah was making a marriage proposal, and *Yah's* proposals are very difficult to resist. In Jewish terminology, an engagement is called a *betrothal* or *erusim* (אירוסים). In Biblical times, as well in some circles today, to break a betrothal would involve going through an official (rabbinic, not civil, although for all practical purposes in modern Israel it is now a civil matter) divorce procedure. The betrothal did not permit the couple to live together, but it did give *marriage status* to the couple. Often the betrothal ceremony was held one year before the actual wedding. In this regard, it is interesting to note that there was about a one-year period between the start of the plagues and the actual marriage in *Exodus 19*.

This engagement was a binding agreement between יהוה and Israel. As far as יהוה was concerned, it was as good as a marriage. However, Israel seemed oblivious about it. This relationship from the start was initiated, carried out, maintained, and [will be] consummated totally by the Almighty – the Eternal Groom Himself. The prophet Hosea elucidates on this betrothal: “²¹*Then I will betroth you to Me forever – yes, I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, justice, covenant loyalty and compassion. ²²I will betroth you to Me with faithfulness, and you will know Adonai. (Hosea 2:21-22 {19-20 in English Bibles})*” [See Steve McConnell's song *V'erastikhli L'olam* in his *Hamoedim* album in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIMOCiZerUY>]

We face a dilemma when we talk about this marriage relationship between *Adonai* and His people. On the one hand, it is clear from the *TNK* that Israel was *Adonai's* bride. However, some say, *God just let this unfaithful bride go and married another*. Perhaps they say this because Ephesians chapter five teaches us that *Adonai's faith community* is His bride. Hence, they say, God rejected Israel and married *the church* instead. BTW, when we see the English word *church* in the *B'rit Chadasha*, for the most part, it means literally, *called-out ones*” for the Greek *ekklesia* (His ruling body). It does not carry with it the overtones of the anti-Semitic religious megalith, which it shortly acquired after the first century. These *called-out ones are Jews* and those from among the nations who believe and trust in *Yeshua*.

This reasoning has quite a few problems. First, according to the prophet Malachi, *Adonai* says He *“hates divorce.”* And then *Yeshua* himself taught against divorce in the Gospel of Matthew. Since this is true, then it is inconceivable that He would go against His own nature to forgive, and instead divorce His unfaithful bride, Israel. Accordingly, when Hosea spoke about the unfaithful bride, he also related how *Adonai* will make her faithful and mend their estranged relationship.

The Four Cups Overview

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We fill the first of four cups of wine during the *Seder*. One explanation offered for this practice is that the four cups are reminders of the four verbs used in the *Torah* to describe the drama of Redemption found in *Sh'mot* (Exodus 6:6-7):

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- (1) “I will BRING you out from Egypt” (Cup of Sanctification)
- (2) “I will DELIVER you from slavery” (Cup of Recitation of the Plagues)
- (3) “I will REDEEM you with an outstretched arm” (Cup of Redemption)
- (4) “I will TAKE you to Me for a people” (Cup of Praise & Intimacy)

At Passover, we celebrate these promises of redemption and relationship by drinking from our cups four times. With each cup, let us remember the union that God desires.



The second problem is that *Adonai* made other promises in both the *Torah* and the rest of the *TNK* where He guaranteed that, while Israel would indeed become unfaithful, He would bring them back to Himself and to their land, (e.g., *Deuteronomy 30*). In addition, He solemnly promised that Israel would always exist as His covenant people, (*Jeremiah 31:27-37*). The prophet Isaiah also had some very strong words of encouragement for Israel as captured in the song *Hatishkach*, by Joel Chernoff, based on *Isaiah 49:15-16* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK2Q44pmLus>): ♪ “*Hatishkach ishah ulah merachem ben-bitnah gam-eleh tishkachnah ve’anochi lo eshcachech. Hen al-kapayim chakotich chomotayich negedi tamid – Can a woman forget her nursing child, or fail to have compassion upon him? She may forget, but know it or not, Israel you are always before Me. Behold, I have engraved thee my people, on the palms of My hands. Your walls are always before me, Israel. How can I forget?*” ♪

How, then, are we to understand *the bride church* terminology? Does *Adonai* have two brides? No! There is *one bride*, *one olive tree*, *one flock*, and believing Gentiles are “*Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.*” It takes one who is thoroughly steeped in the Torah to properly explain this apparent dilemma. Rabbi Paul of Tarsus was such a man. He elucidated on the solution to this problem in *Romans chapter 11*. There, Paul makes it very clear that the Gentile *called-out* or *ekklessia* are ones from among Believers that are *grafted into the olive tree of Israel*. They are not a separate entity. They do not replace Israel. They are in some way, shape, or form, brought into Israel. This does not mean that being *grafted-in* to Israel makes them Jewish. But it does mean that they have become part of Israel (sojourners in the KJV), part of *the bride*. The *bride body* of *Messiah* as if it were, has been enlarged to include all who believe in *Messiah*, regardless of ethnicity or lineage.

Adonai does not give up one bride in place of another. This is called *Replacement Theology*. *Adonai does not have two brides*. This is called *Two Covenant Theory/Theology*. Instead, He has merely enlarged His eternal bride, Israel, by adding to her Gentile (non-Jewish) believers in *Yeshua*. The bottom line is that *Adonai* is indeed our Husband and He will “*will betroth you to Himself forever*” The word *know* in “*and you will know Adonai*” is the Hebrew verb *yodea*, which means to have a conjugal/intimate relationship. *Yah-Yehovah* desires for us to relate to Him in a *close-intimate personal relationship*—one that only a husband and wife can share. “*What shall we say then? Amen & Amen!*” *Shabbat Shalom!*