

The Biblical Role of Women



A look at God's Original Design

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Special Acknowledgements

The basis for the first two parts of this series relies heavily upon the great insight and study of Dr. Skip Moen¹ and his book *Guardian Angel: What you must know about God's design for women*. Dr. Moen's book and blog community have been instrumental in revealing the bigger picture in God's design for women to me.

Equally, I must acknowledge my greatest mentor and teacher, Dr. Hollisa Alewine. It was her material that first opened my eyes to a new paradigm of not only biblical study, but in the significance of the role of women. Dr. Alewine never ceases to amaze me with her ongoing efforts and study material. If you learn one new thing this year, let it be the Creation Gospel² model. I promise you will never look at Scripture the same way again!

Scripture quotes are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* unless otherwise noted. Hebrew definitions are taken from the *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible* by Jeff Benner.

¹ Dr. Moen's website: skipmoen.com

² Dr. Alewine's website: thecreationgospel.com

Part I

Bereshit or Genesis is irrefutably the foundation for the entire Bible. We would not only expect to find the start or “beginning” of all things, but also God’s original design, purpose, and function for His creation. We often forget that the world as we see it has been in a state of corruption for thousands of years. This of course is due to the fall of man and the ensuing reign of sin and death. But amidst all the chaos, our loving God, from the beginning, has had a plan of redemption in place for us and His creation. His focus is always on RESTORATION.

It is within that spirit that I write. My hope is for both men and women to find God’s restoration within their most intimate relationship: marriage. But in order for us to work toward that restoration, we need to understand God’s original design of the male and female. We can begin this process by committing to come to the Word of God with fresh eyes and willing hearts. We cannot allow cultural norms and centuries of tradition to have more weight than the Word of God. If we can agree on the previous two statements, then we are in a place where the power of the Word can effect real change in our lives (and the body of Messiah) for the better.

Male and Female He Created Them

Male

What does it mean to be male or female? The Hebrew text suggests much more than gender. The Hebrew word for male is “*zakar*”. This is the same word for “*to mark or to remember*”. As I’ve mentioned in other places on this blog, to “*remember*” in Hebrew is much more than a mere mental assent. It involves action; to remember is to act on behalf of someone or something. *Zakar* is used in the Ten Commandments in regard to the Sabbath: “**Remember** the Sabbath day”. This commandment is not telling us to “think about” or “recall” the Sabbath; it is telling us to DO something— *and that something is to enter into REST*.

Therefore, being male is the very same (in Hebrew) as “remembering” or “acting on behalf of”. In a restored state, the male remembers the commandments of God; that is, he keeps and guards the Word of YHWH. This is further demonstrated in the Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible under the entry for *zakar* (male/remember).

AHLB # 2121: Remember *co: Male ab: Memorial: A recalling of events of the past or to act upon a past event. To remember in thought as a memorial or mention through speech. Also to act or speak on behalf of another. Male: The one of the family that remembers and passes down the family history through story and family name. Also the one who acts and speaks for the family.*

When we see these seemingly unrelated ideas together in this manner, the Hebrew mindset starts emerging. While we are used to the Greek mindset and worldview that describes the appearance of a noun, the Hebrew’s focus is always on FUNCTION. Thus, a man is called male (*zakar*) for one reason in Hebrew. His designed function is to remember who YHWH is, what YHWH requires, and then act on this knowledge. Likewise, he is the one that ACTS on behalf of his wife

and children. A “male” passes his knowledge of the Creator to his children and they receive the “name” of their father.

Female

Genesis chapter 1 uses the Hebrew word *neqevah* that we translate as female. *Neqevah* is the counterpart to *zakar*. These two must become “one flesh” to properly display the image of Elohim (God). The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible defines our term this way:

AHLB# 2430: Pierce: *To make a hole by piercing. Also to curse in the sense of piercing through. Curse, express, blaspheme, bore, name, pierce, appoint, hole, strike* **Hole: Female:** *As with a hole. Female, woman, maid.*

Other than the obvious sexual connotations, this word also implies walls, structure, and boundaries. This can easily be visualized if we think of a “hole”; it is surrounded on all sides. This is precisely why *neqevah* has cognates that mean *to designate* and *setting* (as in a *setting* of a precious stone). Dr. Moen suggests that these Hebrew words describe the function of a female; she is a natural boundary setter or protector of boundaries. As we examine the Hebrew account of Genesis, his suggestion becomes more of a matter of fact as we shall see.

So far we have discovered:

- A male (*zakar*) is designed to remember who YHWH is, what He requires, and then act upon that knowledge.
- A female (*neqevah*) is designed to be a protector/guardian of boundaries.

God’s spoken purpose for mankind was to rule and subdue the earth and all its many creatures. In order to fulfill this mandate, Adam and Chavah (Eve) would have to multiply and fill the earth with their offspring. (Gen.1:26-28) YHWH is more specific in Genesis chapter 2 in reference to man’s purpose. He is to *dress* and *keep* the garden (vs.15, NASB). The Hebrew terms are *avad* and *shamar*. *Avad* means to work or serve; *shamar* means to hedge, protect, or guard. In other words, man’s obligation to God is to “work” by serving the creation. This is a holy act of worship. When man fulfills his function, he not only serves the creation, but himself. This is the natural result of his service to the creation or garden. You might even say Adam’s work (deeds) brings him blessings. This is a symbiotic relationship, perfectly designed by the Creator. As Adam works the *adamah* (ground), the very origination of his being, he is also worshipping the Creator.

The Ezer Kenegdo

In Genesis chapter 2, God tells us how the one man became two – male and female – with the introduction of Chavah (Eve). God calls her an *ezer kenegdo* (suitable helper). This was her divinely designed purpose. She has a special role to play in the life of Adam.

Looking at the text line by line, we see first that God places the man He had made in the garden and immediately gives the first commandment. It's a dietary law: "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17 NASB)

Keep this context in mind as to what God says and does in the next verse: *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a **helper suitable** for him."* (Gen. 2:18 NASB)

How many of us have stopped and considered the implications of these verses being juxtaposed together like this? Why does YHWH give Adam the first commandment and then IMMEDIATELY tell us that Adam needs an *ezer kenegdo* (suitable helper)? Dr. Moen also asks, "How can we ignore the obvious conclusion that the purpose of the *ezer kenegdo* is somehow connected to the command for Adam to obey?"³ This is where the story in the Hebrew gets really interesting.

An *ezer* is literally an aid, a help, a guard, and a protector. In nearly all of its uses in the Tanakh (O.T.), *ezer* is used in reference to YHWH (the LORD).

Ex. 18:4 The other was named Eliezer, for he said, "The God of my father was my help (EZER), and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Dt. 33:26 "There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help (EZER), And through the skies in His majesty."

Ps. 33:20 Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help (EZER) and our shield.

Ps. 70:5 But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help (EZER) and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.

Hos. 13:9 It is your destruction, O Israel, That you are against Me, against your help (EZER).

What are we supposed to make of this? Why does the Bible use language in the creation of Eve that is normally only used in reference to YHWH? Have we made a tragic mistake in assuming that Chavah (Eve) was created to be a simple domestic assistant to Adam? Following the hermeneutic rule of complete mention demonstrates that Eve's role is far more important than our cultural norms exhibit. Is Chavah's purpose and function to be a help to Adam in a similar way that God is a help to us? The Hebrew text implies the affirmative. In other words, Chavah is a type of spiritual guide to Adam. Her entire existence is to "help" Adam fulfill his divinely created purpose – to obey the Words of YHWH. It is in this way she aids and protects Adam.

But there is more to this story as we have only examined the *ezer*. The Hebrew *kenegdo* is actually a compound of two prepositions, *ki* and *neged*. *Neged* can mean before, in front of,

³ See Guardian Angel, p.74

corresponding to, against, and opposite⁴. *Ki* usually means like or as. When we put *ezer* with this peculiar compound preposition, the implication is a help/protector/rescuer that opposes or is against. That may sound like a contradiction. However, the commentator Rashi makes a rather eloquent point about this text, “If he [Adam] is worthy, [she will be] a help [*ezer*]. If he is not worthy [she will be] against him [*kenegdo*] for strife.”

Do we not also see Israel’s *ezer*, YHWH, helping us in this same manner? When we are walking uprightly He is our help, but when we stray is He not against us? YHWH performs the role of *ezer* to steer us toward righteousness. His desire even when He is “against” us is to turn us back to repentance. In similar fashion, that is the God ordained purpose of the woman.⁵ Dr. Moen describes it this way:

*The text suggests that she is designed for the specific purpose of maintaining obedience between her man and God. She is his intercessor. She is to guard his relationship with the Creator, support him when he embraces God’s direction and oppose him when he does not. She is the helper-opposite in the only arena where he needs additional attention. Not work, not world-changing assignments, not dominion, not stewarding – but spiritual awareness and obedience. Without her, the man is at great risk and particularly vulnerable.*⁶

If this is God’s original design for woman, what then happened at the fall?

Part II

Adam, Chavah, and the Serpent

We have already established the pre-sin creation roles of man and woman in Part I. Here is a quick summary:

- Man (Adam) as a male (*zakar*) is specifically designed to remember who YHWH is, what He requires, and then act upon that knowledge. These traits enable him to guard, protect, and work the earth.
- Woman as a female (*neqevah*) is designed to be a protector/guardian of boundaries. God calls her an *ezer kenegdo*, a helper that opposes Adam. She is a natural intercessor for Adam and supports him when he embraces God’s direction and opposes him when he does not. God Himself says it is not good for Adam to be without an *ezer kenegdo*.

⁴ See Guardian Angel, p. 108

⁵ Before jumping right to the New Testament scriptures to “prove” this is not the case, we must finish our examination of the beginning. We cannot read our personal convictions and dogma back into the Genesis text. We must carefully handle the Word of Truth. We cannot let our current paradigm interpret the Word; rather, we must let the Word interpret itself.

⁶ <http://skipmoen.com/2009/05/30/a-special-kind-of-help/#comments>

In this section, I'd like to highlight some points we all already know. When YHWH formed Adam, He used the dust of the ground (*adamah*). Do you see *Adam* in *adamah*? Adam is not only the proper name of the first man, but is also a generic term for man and mankind. Man comes from the *adamah*. All the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky also are formed from the ground or *adamah*. (Gen. 2:19) Interestingly, Adam's responsibility is to take care of the very substance from which he, the beasts, and the birds were formed. Adam is created from the ground to take care of the ground and all that it produces (plant and animal).

What about Chavah (Eve)? Instead of being formed directly from the earth or ground, she is fashioned or built (*banah*) from the already existing man. If Chavah follows the pattern of Adam, then her responsibility will be to guard, protect, and serve the thing from which she is fashioned. As we discovered in Part I, that is exactly her God ordained role. She is built from Adam and it is her duty to guard him.

In the Hebrew text, Adam is formed (*yatzar*); that is he was molded or shaped from the dust or clay of *adamah* (ground). But Chavah was built (*banah*) from the side or rib of Adam. The difference implies that Chavah wasn't a "new" creation; rather she was a "modified" *Adam*. She is still the exact substance. This is why Adam exclaimed, "*this is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.*" What we tend to forget is why Adam needed Chavah, his *ezer kenegdo*. This is why the very next line in the text reminds us:

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:24)

The clause "*for this reason*" refers us back to verse 23. BECAUSE woman was taken FROM man,⁷ it is necessary that he one day leave his father and mother and be joined with his wife or *ezer kenegdo*. Think about this for a moment. In our culture and most of the world, men have historically held a hierarchical position over women. So the obvious question is why does the **man** leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife? Would it not make more sense for the **woman** to leave the "covering" of her father and mother and then be joined to her husband? Mull these questions over as we continue with the text.

And then the serpent approaches Chavah (Eve). But WHY does he approach Chavah and not Adam? If Adam is Chavah's protector, wouldn't the serpent first approach Adam? That is IF Adam was indeed functioning in the role of "gatekeeper" in their relationship. Most commentators throughout the centuries assume that the serpent's choice in approaching Chavah was due to her propensity toward deception. She was weak. But nowhere does the Genesis text imply such notions. We must adjust our preconceived ideas about Chavah and the garden. **Remember** Chavah was specifically designed by the Creator of the Universe to guard and protect **Adam**. I propose that the reason the serpent approached Chavah is precisely because she IS the

⁷ We see this idea repeated in 1 Cor. 11:19. Woman was created FOR man, not the other way around. A man apparently needs a woman. It truly is not good for a man to be alone. I find this strikingly similar to the edict that man was not made for Shabbat (Mark 2:27), but Shabbat was made for man. Mankind (men and women) NEED a Shabbat rest according to the Creator.

“gatekeeper” and protector of the relationship. Adam was allowing Chavah to function in her God given role and the serpent knew if he could beguile Chavah (the guard), he also had Adam.

I realize this rubs against the grain of many theological boxes and makes some people uncomfortable. Therefore, before I continue, I must state right here that what I’m submitting is NOT a feminine hierarchy. Chavah’s role was not a higher status than Adam’s. As a matter of fact, as we will see, neither my musings in this article nor Dr. Moen’s book support hierarchy roles for either gender. Instead, they bring balance and equality back into relationships and fellowships, IF the parties involved seek out biblical restoration. This will become clear as we proceed.

The Boundary Setter

*The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it **or touch it**, or you will die.’” (Gen. 3:2-3 NASB)*

Chavah is the first person to initiate a “fence-law” around God’s Word. A fence law is a manmade law designed to guard or protect someone from even coming close to breaking God’s commandments. These laws are very typical of Rabbinic Judaism today and ancient Judaism’s in the past. Chavah, the guardian and protector of Adam’s obedience to God, must have been convinced that this precautionary measure would help her to do her job better. As we will see, it didn’t work then and it doesn’t work now.

*The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to **her husband with her**, and he ate. (Gen. 3:4-6)*

Now knowing the true biblical role of the woman, why do you suppose that Chavah was tempted by the idea of knowing good and evil and gaining wisdom? Is it possible that these things were desirable because she felt they would enable her to better fulfill her role in serving and protecting Adam? Regardless of Chavah’s motivation, she stepped outside of the will of God and in effect became the first sinner of mankind — and Adam was right behind her.

Chavah was deceived by the serpent. He played to her desires and she took the bait, but Adam was not deceived. So, why did he eat the fruit? Adam made the tragic mistake of placing someone else before YHWH. Instead of choosing to do what he knew was right, he willingly chose to follow his wife. Maybe he thought he couldn’t live without her, his *ezer kenegdo*. Regardless, the text states that Adam was *with her*; the Hebrew implies he was close enough to touch her. So, any allusions that Adam wasn’t present are false. Chavah acted in ignorance and Adam acted in rebellion. Neither action is a good idea.

The Curses

*And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “**The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.**” (Gen. 3:11-12)*

*Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “**The serpent deceived me, and I ate.**” (Gen. 3:13)*

After Adam and Eve sinned, YHWH asks Adam a rhetorical question. Adam responds by placing all the blame on the woman. His tone is actually accusatory toward YHWH! Notice he says, “the woman **you** gave to be with me”. Adam is angry; not only with Chavah, but with YHWH. Chavah blames the serpent and admits to her deception. But, the serpent is not even questioned. YHWH simply chooses to begin the judgments with the deceiver.

Serpent: *The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, **Cursed** are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” (Gen. 3:14-15)*

Chavah: *To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth (conception), In pain you will bring forth children; and your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.” (Gen. 3:16)*

Adam: *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; **Cursed** is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” (Gen. 3:17-19)*

Notice that Adam and Chavah themselves are not cursed. Instead, what is cursed as a consequence of their sin is their “roles” or “purpose”. Adam comes from the *adamah* (the ground) and it is the *adamah* that is cursed. What would normally be almost effortless will now come about through great toil and sweat for Adam. Therefore, we would expect a similar consequence in Chavah’s account.

If Chavah comes from Adam, what was once natural will now prove to be difficult and painful. And that is exactly what we see. Chavah will conceive and bear children in pain — *the Hebrew term also implies “great worry”*. What mother doesn’t have deep concern and worry over her children not only during pregnancy and birth, but throughout their child’s life?

The second statement to Chavah has caused much controversy throughout history. Chavah’s **desire** will be for Adam. Many misogynistic commentators have suggested this is an

unquenchable sexual desire. Any honest man can tell you this is certainly NOT the case, lol. (And if they're super honest, they wish it were!) The Hebrew term is *teshukah*. This unique Hebrew word is only used in three passages in the entire Bible: Genesis 3:16; 4:7, and Song of Solomon 7:10. Let's look at the other Genesis text first.

*Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.**"*
(Gen. 4:6-7)

YHWH tells Cain that SIN has *teshukah* (an unquenchable desire) for him, but he must rule or master it. The Hebrew structure is identical to the judgment placed on Chavah after she sinned. Chavah has the same desire for Adam as sin has for mankind. It is voracious and powerful. Cain is told he must rule, master, or control sin. How does one do this? YHWH says that if Cain chooses to do well (what is good), he will remain safely in the house. But if not, just outside the door, sin is like a lion ready to pounce on him.

So, what does this phrase imply in reference to Chavah: "*and your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you*"? Is YHWH telling Adam that he must rule or master Chavah's desire for him? After all, this is the way this verse has been traditionally interpreted. Men control your women. But YHWH wasn't talking to **Adam**. He was speaking to Chavah. This is the result of her fallen nature, not God's original design. The consequence for Chavah's sin is on her purpose, her God ordained role. She was designed to be Adam's *ezer kenegdo*, remember? Her desire is to fulfill that role, just as Adam's desire is to guard, protect, and tend to the ground (earth) and all its creatures. There is no sin or punishment in her DESIRE. Just as the ground will fail to willingly release its abundance to Adam without much toil, so Adam will not easily relent to Chavah's design to be his *ezer*.

Chavah has failed Adam in her role as *ezer kenegdo*. He no longer trusts her to be his guard, protector, and help. In the fallen nature, Adam decides that he must take the reins and "rule" over Chavah. This is not YHWH's design. This is the consequence of sin! Where the two once ruled together (each with their perfectly designed roles), there is now a hierarchy, and Adam sits in the seat of power.

This revelation has many implications and consequences that can be traced throughout the biblical text and recorded history. But we still serve the God of Restoration. As redeemed followers of the God of Israel, we want to return to the garden. And that, I believe, is what the third verse in scripture with the word *teshukah* (desire) is all about. I hope to explore it in Part III.

Part III

In order to properly follow my thoughts in this section, please first read Part I and Part II. I'm sure the last section elicited some pretty strong emotions in most readers. If my conclusions

made you angry or perhaps even fearful, I suggest you prayerfully study the Genesis text yourself with a good Bible program. Even if you don't understand a lick of Hebrew, these tools will enable you to investigate the original language. It is amazing what a little effort lends to proper interpretation and understanding. I fully believe that YHWH made each of us with the ability to question. While questioning tradition and the biblical text may feel like an irreverent act, I assure you that it is not. How else does one arrive with an answer unless one first asks a question? As any good teacher will tell you, there are no stupid questions, only stupid answers.

Modern Christianity and her many denominations usually frown at questions that challenge her set doctrines, creeds, and traditions. Don't rock the boat; we don't handle storms very well. But our Adonai (Lord) has no fear of storms; He is fully capable of calming the raging winds and rains with a simple Word. Moreover, it is in the midst of these strong winds that He invites us to join Him to walk on the water.⁸ And we are fully capable as long as our focus remains on Him and not the swirling circumstances around us. I invite you to challenge your current doctrine and tradition. Our thoughts are not YHWH's thoughts⁹; He is infinitely greater than we can possibly imagine. Only pride could cause us to think we have cornered Him with our theology and tradition. Did Paul not say that we currently only see in the mirror dimly?¹⁰ We must always be willing to let the Word mold and change us (and our doctrine, beliefs, and traditions).

Teshukah Revisited

We discussed *teshukah* in the last section, but I thought we would all benefit from a little Hebrew word study of this unique term before exploring its third and final use in scripture. Below I have listed Strong's definitions for *teshukah* and its root, *shook*. Then, below that is the entry from the *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible*, a lexicon written from a Hebraic perspective.

H8669 תְּשׁוּקָה *tesh-oo-kaw'* From H7783 in the original sense of *stretching* out after; a *longing*: – desire.

H7783 שָׁקַק *shook* A primitive root; to *run* after or over, that is, *overflow*: – overflow, water.

AHLB#: 1479-J (V) ac: **Drink** co: **River** The pictograph “shin” is a picture of the two front teeth representing the idea of two, the “Quf” is a picture of the sun at the horizon that cycles around the earth. Combined these mean “repeat a cycle”. During the rainy season, repeated each year, the riverbeds become full of water. The surrounding land is soaked with water allowing for the planting of crops. **Rushing:** From the rushing of a river. [freq. 1] |k|jv: running| {str: 4944} **Drink** The life giving water from the rivers. **Overflow:** The overflowing of the banks of a river. [freq. 3]

⁸ Mt. 14:23-33

⁹ Is. 55

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 13:12

(vf: Hiphil) |kjb: overflow| {str: 7783} **Desire:** As a course. [freq. 3] |kjb: desire|
{str: 8669}

In Hebrew, *teshukah* is a type of desire that flows like mighty rushing waters; it overflows regular river beds and spreads forcefully onto the surrounding land. This is the force of desire that Chavah has for Adam and sin has for Cain. But don't confuse this biblical word for "desire" with our English definition, for this has nothing to do with a "need" that must be met. Rabbi David Fohrman describes *teshukah* as a desire born not of lack but of fullness.¹¹ *Teshukah* has no need for its object. It is a desire that is divorced from need.

The desire that Chavah has for Adam comes from a place of fullness. Anything that overflows shares its abundance. We often use a similar analogy in reference to being full of God's Spirit, anointing, or fresh insight. We have no lack; we are full (in fact, overly full). This fullness compels us to SHARE it. It just flows forth from our being, causing us to "flood" others with our abundance. By the way, this is the same desire that YHWH has for His people. He doesn't "need" or "lust" after us as the English word implies, rather His fullness (blessings; good) overflows upon us.

Sin has this same powerful *teshukah* for you and me. Woe. Think about that for a moment. It has no "need" or "lack" that it desires us. Instead, it has a forceful overflow (drive) toward us because of its abundance! So what is the difference between Chavah's desire and sin's desire? In the account with Cain, YHWH explicitly tells Cain to rule or master this mighty impulse. Our evil inclination can only be overcome by keeping the door to the house (YHWH's covenant) closed. Step out to the left or to the right and POW, sin has pounced on your back.

Sadly, most men think that they must control a woman's desire in the same way that we master sin. Keep her pinned in the house, quiet, uneducated, and controlled. This tactic creates an illusion of safety for men. Chavah will not misguide Adam ever again. This approach usually results with nagging, overbearing, controlling, and manipulative women. Or conversely, after years of subjugation they can become depressed, apathetic, fearful, overly needy, or insecure.

The reason why this happens is because the woman is denied to live out her God ordained purpose: to be the man's *ezer kenegdo*. As we have discovered, her desire to function in her purpose is an unrelenting force. If she is denied this desire, she will (wrongly) resort to manipulation and control to "guard" and guide her mate covertly. Worse, she may turn her desire to be an *ezer* toward her children,¹² a role she was never intended to play.

In Chavah's case, YHWH neither told her nor Adam to rule or master her *teshukah*. Instead, YHWH simply states the consequence of her sin. Though her desire to be her husband's *ezer* is unrelenting, Adam will now resist her. Chavah's role was to guard Adam. She is perfectly created to fulfill this role. But Adam will refuse her and will rule or master her instead. This is not what YHWH commanded.

¹¹ Fohrman, Rabbi David, *The Beast that Crouches at the Door*. Baltimore: HFBS Publishing, 2011. Kindle file.

¹² Dr. Moen fully explores this concept in *Guardian Angel*.

Eve's desire wasn't the problem or the curse. Men that rule their women in the ways mentioned above are actually living out the fallen nature whether they realize it or not. By controlling and reigning over women, men become testimonies of fallen Adam. A careful read of the Genesis text attests to this fact as we have already seen. Without true restoration, men and women are doomed to relive this vicious cycle again and again. So, how do we bring godly balance and renewal back into these strained relationships?

Song of Songs

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. (Song of Songs 1:1)

I believe the answer to our restoration is prophetically pictured in the most passionate of all the books of Holy Writ. Therefore, I'm going to devote some space to the background of this book. The Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon has an interesting name in Hebrew. I believe it is worth pointing out here because of its allusion to redemption. This insinuation is why this book is typically read during the feast of Pesach (Passover) and Matzah (Unleavened Bread). These connected feasts are the first of the seven Feasts of YHWH and occur in the spring, the same season for the setting of the Song of Songs. The theme of redemption and unmerited favor flows through these feast days and in a profound way the Song of Songs reflects this focus.

Shir Ha-Shirim or the Song of Songs is a Hebrew grammatical construction denoting the superlative; that is, the title attests to the greatness of the song, similar to "the Lord of lords", "The King of Kings" or "Holy of Holies". Jewish sages explain the title (and first verse) of this book with the phrase: "which is *leShlomo*". *Shlomo* means "The King of Peace," and also "The King Who is Whole".¹³ Since Solomon comes from the Hebrew word *shalom* (peace) and biblical peace denotes completeness, wholeness, and no lack, the image that the title invokes is striking. **The male figure in this poem is complete or whole.** This is exasperated by the fact that the word *Shulamite* (the woman character in the story) is the Hebrew feminine form of Solomon! A spectacular picture emerges; one of a whole and complete MAN and WOMAN. This is real unity and marriage at its best. This truly is the *Song of all Songs*; it is a return to Eden!

The authorship of this book is generally attributed to King Solomon. However, there are several factors as to why a growing number of scholars are rejecting this antiquated view. First, if Solomon authored the Song of Songs, he wrote it as if he were a Shulamite woman.¹⁴ This would be an odd thing for any male to do in the biblical era. Rev. Dr. Renita J. Weems has a great point about this: "*It's the only book in the Bible where a woman's voice predominates and is in the first person. The imagery, the language, and the emotions that are expressed are ones that one would expect and associate with a woman*". Secondly, there is a debate about the dating of the

¹³ <http://hasidismfortherestofus.wordpress.com/2012/04/29/song-of-songs-holy-of-holies/>

¹⁴ Patsy Rae Dawson, a Christian marriage and sex counselor, agrees with my sentiments: http://patsyraedawson.com/?page_id=6#woman

book. Many modern Christian¹⁵ and Jewish¹⁶ scholars think the evidence clearly points to a postexilic work from the Persian period.

Regardless of who penned the Song of Songs, it still remains the only book of the Bible written from the perspective of a *woman*. And it is within its pages that we find the third and final use of the Hebrew word, *teshukah*.

*“I am my beloved’s, And his **desire** is for me”. (SOS 7:10)*

Immediately our attention should be drawn to the obvious **reversal** of the edict against Chavah (Eve) in Genesis 3:16. In the fallen nature, Chavah’s desire is for Adam. Here, his desire (*teshukah*) is for her! What kind of desire from fullness does the man have for a woman? In the fallen world, there is no such thing. Therefore, this language is pointing us back to the garden, the place of complete redemption and restoration.

There are many interpretations given for this unique book of scripture. Most often it is regulated to an allegory about God and His people by both Jews and Christians. But there is a minority literal view that the book is exactly what it seems to be: *a sensual love poem written by a woman*. In fact, some of its verses are so erotic that its pages are banned by Judaism until reaching the age of thirteen.

For those of you that have been studying the difference between the Hebrew and Greek mindset, an obvious thought should come to mind. Identifying who is right or wrong on the proper interpretation of the Song of Songs is a moot point. Since Hebrew uses block logic rather than linear Greek logic, this book can be an allegory about God and His people, a literal love poem, and prophecy all rolled into one dynamic book.

Since the first level of Hebraic Bible interpretation is literal, I suggest reading the Songs of Songs in this way first — ignoring the allegorical flashes and hints of prophecy. Only after we’ve discovered the richness of the real physical love between the woman and the man, can we properly appreciate the spiritual significance of the book. They are both equally important to the Hebrew mindset.

The Woman

Interestingly, the Shulamite woman in this little book¹⁷ of scripture challenges most ancient and modern characterizations of the *ideal* woman. She is not quiet, meek, passive, or reserved. In fact, she shamelessly describes her unbridled desire for her lover and seeks after him. Her voice is one of strength and intense passion; she is determined and driven. She is neither victimized nor criticized for this behavior. Dr. Weems says, *“There’s no kind of moral voice, third-person voice*

¹⁵ Coogan, Michael. A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 394

¹⁶ http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Writings/Song_of_Songs.shtml

¹⁷ It’s only 117 verses long.

that inserts itself into the story that suggests that women like this come to a bad end. That they're punished, that they are killed".¹⁸

The Shulamite's directness cannot be understated. Her proclamation in 7:10, is extended by another apparent role reversal from cultural norms in chapter 8:

*"Put me like a **seal** over your heart, Like a **seal** on your arm. For love is as strong as death, **Jealousy** is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD. "Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, It would be utterly despised." (SOS 8:6-7)*

A signet ring bears the image of its owner's seal. Anything with the seal's image pressed upon it becomes property of or decreed by the owner. The ancient seal that the woman refers to is most often associated with royalty. Can you see the imagery of ownership in the "seal"? In our case, the reversal is that it is a **woman** that requests this of her man. She, as true *ezer kenegdo*, is assuming responsibility for her man. A man leaves his father and mother (his original guardians) to be joined with his wife (his new guardian). This is a return to God's original design. This concept is further solidified by the woman comparing love with jealousy. The Hebrew word for jealousy, *kinah*, implies possession and right of property.¹⁹

The man in the Song of Songs has relinquished his fallen nature of domination, and restores the woman to the role of *ezer kenegdo*. Both the man and the woman are functioning in their purpose. No longer does the ground resist Adam; no longer does Adam resist Chavah. They are one. They are equal. This reunion can have only one result: an erotic love affair. Do you find it as intriguing as I do that this prophetic glimpse of restoration is in the midst of the most explicit book of love in all of Scripture?

But, what does all this really mean for the *ezer kenegdo* or the woman? What does her role actually entail compared to man's? Biblically, how are men and women meant to function in the believing community? What does redeemed marriage look like? What about Paul? There is still more to come on this captivating topic. We will start with the Proverbs 31 woman in Part IV.

Part IV

Woman of Valor

On Mother's Day one the most quoted passages during Sunday morning services is Proverbs 31. Each mother is commended for her role as a *virtuous* woman. Images of Mother Theresa and other conservative humanitarian women come to mind. Most women and especially men, envision the Proverbs 31 woman to be plain, prudish, and quite frankly — *boring*. Yet, both

¹⁸ <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/2004/06/The-Passionate-Woman-Who-Wrote-Song-Of-Songs.aspx>

¹⁹ See the Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible under the entry: Strong's #7068: AHLB#: 1428-E (N1).

genders believe that this (boring) image of women is what God truly desires. So, we all sit in the pews extolling something that women believe they can never measure up to, and men only wish they found attractive. But no one dares to verbalize these inward thoughts. Instead, we all smile and nod and pray to God that He change our dreadful hearts.

I have some great news if you identify with my sentiments. Though the Proverbs 31 woman is often translated as the “Virtuous Woman”, that is not what the text says in Hebrew. In fact, as we investigate the original language about this “ideal” woman, you will find that she is anything but boring! Women will sigh in relief and gasp with delight in the fact that YHWH truly knows their heart. Men will rediscover that the woman YHWH made just for him is not only attractive, but exciting!

The Eshet Chayil

*Who can find a **virtuous woman**? for her price is far above rubies. (Pr. 31:10 KJV)*

The Hebrew terms for virtuous woman are “*eshet chayil*”. While *eshet* does mean woman, *chayil* is often translated as virtuous, excellent, good, vigorous, worthy, capable, or valorous (valor) in this verse. Strong’s Bible definitions defines it this way: a *force*, whether of men, means or other resources; an army, power, might, host, wealth, virtue, valor, strength, and worth.

In nearly every one of its uses, *chayil* is coupled with men, particularly strong men of war. There is no room in this Hebrew word for virtue (unless those virtues are strength or might), plainness, meekness, or goodness. So why, when *chayil* is joined with women, do the translator’s choose to use *restrained* English terminology? What happened to all the force of *chayil*?

I submit to you that the reason is based in the fallen nature of Adam. Subtle (and not so subtle) misogyny has plagued the church for far too long. The truth is that the word *chayil* empowers women more than most men can handle. I will admit however, that most of these men mean well and really believe they are in God’s will by mastering or ruling women. They (and women) have been told and trained that this is their God given right for a very long time. My hope is to peel back the English language and centuries of church tradition to reveal the freeing reality of what YHWH and the Hebrew text says about women.

Warrior

A *chayil*, in its simplest translation, is a warrior. The introduction of the Proverbs 31 woman is more true to the Hebrew text when it uses words like this: “Who can find a *powerful, mighty, valiant* woman”? This is the **true** “ideal” woman; but just in case you think I’m reaching, the succeeding verses (in Hebrew) reveal the same message.

Here are some examples of this courageous woman that are obscured by the English translation. In verse 11, her husband “*has no lack of gain,*” the word for gain is “*shalal,*” which usually means booty, spoil or plunder. This is the type of gain that a warrior brings back from a successful military battle. The valorous woman knows how to prosper her family spiritually and physically. Thus, she blesses her husband and children.

In verse 15, “*she rises while it is still night and provides food for her household,*” the word translated food is “*teref*”, the normal word for prey. Like a lioness hunting in the night, bringing back prey for her cubs, a woman provides for her family. The suggestion of fierceness or violence adds to the woman’s portrayal as a *chayil*. Verse 17 declares that “*she girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong*”. The Hebrew word for strong (arms) is “*amatz*”, meaning courage. Can you see the warrior image in each instance?

Verse 25 is of special import to our study. The woman says, “*strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come*”. The last phrase is *yom acharon*. This literally says, “*She laughs in the latter days*”. I believe this is another prophetic text about role reversals or the role restoration we have been exploring. This warrior woman is prepared both physically and spiritually for the last days. For as we’ve seen in the previous articles, she is most likely laughing for joy at her complete restoration in her role as *ezer*.

The fact that the Proverbs 31 woman is brave, mighty, valorous, and powerful cannot be denied. Think of this the next time you read this passage or are subjected to another teaching about the meek, weak, and quiet woman. God designed woman to be an *ezer*. Do you recall what an *ezer* actually is? An *ezer* is a help, rescuer, savior, and protector. This sounds an awful lot like an *eshet chayil*, does it not? What does a warrior do but fight for and protect what is theirs? This is real biblical womanhood.

Real Roles

But lest you think that all these terms are usurping the role of a man, I must explain this further. Men and women were created equal, but different. Each gender has specific roles to play in God’s design. What I have been putting forth to you is a return to God’s original plan. What must be removed are tradition, dogma, and most importantly our fallen nature if we desire to live and walk out this restoration. Our Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus), has already paved the way for us to overcome our sinful nature. He has freed us from this slavery. But too often, we are still wearing shackles in the form of tradition²⁰ and doctrine.²¹ We must choose to break free from these manmade chains.

²⁰ Mar 7:13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

²¹ Mar 7:6-8 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. (7) ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’ (8) “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

The man is created to work and serve the creation. His domain of work or service is primarily outside of the home. He is like the man in Proverbs 31 that sits at the city gates. He is there to guard the city, give counsel, and do business. But the woman is built with the same fierceness and power as the man. Her domain or service is primarily inside the home. Her service benefits her man and her children. But what she does and how she does it is identical to the man. The difference is in the object of their service. No one gender rules or exercises dominion over the other. They are equal and equally capable both inside and outside of the home.

I have some questions for the women out there that might help put these ideas into perspective. Every woman I've EVER met knows in her bones what her husband *needs* to be doing. In a subtle or not so subtle way, the woman is always pushing or influencing her husband in one direction or another. If she is a woman of faith, then hopefully she is pushing him toward godly obedience. The contrary would be that she is pushing him away from godly obedience in her own fallen nature of Chavah (Eve). So here are the questions.

1. Do you have a compulsion to guide your husband (in nearly every issue of life)?
2. Do you always offer your opinion on matters whether he requests it or not?
3. Do you set limitations on what he does and doesn't do? For example, do you tell him (as if he were a child) when he's watched too much television, been working too much, needs to call his mother, needs to do household chores, not dressed appropriately, not reading the bible or praying enough, needs to seek YHWH instead of relying on his own strength, needs to discipline the children, needs to eat better or exercise, etc.?

Deep down every woman knows she was designed to bless her husband. While he may accuse her of being a control freak or a micro manager, the truth is that she can't help her herself. She is an *ezer*; and as such, she is his counselor, protector, and guide. The problem for what seems like forever is that neither the woman nor the man have known WHY she's the way she is. I hope that by now you can answer that age old question.

In Part V, we will look at the Proverbs 31 woman on a deeper spiritual level.

Part V

Proverbs

In Judaism, the Proverbs 31 woman is often taught as an allegory for the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh), Wisdom, Torah, Shekinah (Divine Presence), Shabbat, and the Soul. At first glance this may seem odd, but we must remember that Jewish rabbis, teachers, and sages can read, write, and speak Hebrew fluently. This knowledge allows them to see many things in the original text that isn't obvious in English (or any other language for that matter). We will focus on 2 of these allegories in particular: Wisdom and the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom

“Wisdom” is the primary character in the Book of Proverbs, and is personified as a woman. If this is a foreign concept to you, I suggest stopping right now to read through this wisdom book. It will become apparent that Proverbs often depicts two women — one righteous and one wicked — to contrast two types of people. These are the good and evil inclinations²² that every person possesses. King Solomon personifies good and evil in order to teach his son (and us) discernment. YHWH and Solomon instruct us to choose to follow our good inclination (or our spirit, rather than the flesh).

In Hebrew, the Spirit of God or any spirit for that matter is always written in the **feminine** form.²³ At first, it may seem strange or even blasphemous to refer to God in the feminine. But your Bible does so over and over again in reference to His Spirit in the original language. This is not goddess worship as the pagans claim. This is simply what the Bible teaches. God is neither a man nor a woman, yet He has attributes of both genders. This is why it takes a *male and a female* to properly display His image.²⁴

The Holy Spirit of YHWH displays the feminine attributes of YHWH. And the Bible tells us these attributes are manifested in seven characteristics. This is not to be confused with the *fruit* of the Spirit. The fruit is the natural result of this seven branched tree, not the foundation. We can use a biblical motif to describe these 7 facets. In the Tabernacle in the wilderness, YHWH told Moses to construct a menorah (lampstand) with seven branches. The menorah was to be made of ONE piece of beaten gold.²⁵ The menorah would illuminate the Holy Place that leads into the Holy of Holies. There is only ONE central branch with three branches on either side. The six outer branches are only out workings of the main central branch. The Bible often uses the symbolism of this magnificent menorah to describe God’s Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh).

Like the seven branches on the ONE golden Menorah, Isaiah, Zechariah, Yeshua (Jesus), and John all write about the Holy Spirit having seven attributes (branches). If you wish to learn about the seven spirits of God in depth, I suggest finding a Creation Gospel²⁶ trainer and exploring this fascinating topic. Here are some of the verses that attest to the seven.

*The **Spirit of the LORD** will rest on Him, The **spirit of wisdom** and **understanding**,
The spirit of **counsel** and **strength**, The spirit of **knowledge** and the **fear** of the
LORD. (Is. 11:2)*

*He said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all
of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its **seven lamps** on it with seven spouts
belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it...Then he said to me, “This*

²² Christians might refer to this as the battle between the spirit and the flesh.

²³ In Hebrew, all things have either a masculine or feminine gender. There is no neuter or neutral gender like there is in English.

²⁴ Gen 1:27, God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

²⁵ Read Exodus 25

²⁶ Please refer to Dr. Hollisa Alewine’s website: thecreationgospel.com

*is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, **but by My Spirit,**' says the LORD of hosts... 'For who has despised the day of small things? But **these seven** will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—**these are the eyes of the LORD** which range to and fro throughout the earth.' (Zec. 4:2, 6, 10)*

*Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were **seven lamps of fire** burning before the throne, which **are the seven Spirits of God**; (Rev 4:5 see also Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 5:6)*

While there is much to learn about these “seven” spirits, we must stay on topic. Wisdom is not only **the first of the seven** manifestations of God’s Spirit, but is also personified as a woman in the Bible. It is for this reason that the Jewish Sages reading the Proverbs 31 text see the *eshet chayil* (Woman of Valor, Strength, Might) as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit. This may come as a relief to many women. Thank goodness! I was feeling pretty inadequate compared to this “perfect” woman.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit shows us the way of wisdom which leads us into the fullness of all seven Spirits of God (Is. 11:2) and teaches us not only the proper role of women, but also our strength (*chayil*). If we allow God’s Spirit to have reign in our hearts and lives, we will naturally produce the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22. Do you remember how the woman is designed to be an *ezer*, a helper? Do you know of another “helper” in scripture?

*Behold, **God is my helper**; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul. (Ps. 54:4)*

*“But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and **bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.** (Jn. 14:26)*

The Holy Spirit operates as a type of helper in the life of a believer. Sometimes He is our aid; sometimes He opposes us in order to ‘turn’ us in a different direction. This is the same function the woman plays (on a much smaller scale) in the life of her husband! Think about the following roles that the Holy Spirit plays in our lives and compare them to the role of woman.

Actions

- The Holy Spirit comforts and nurtures; so does a woman.
- He teaches and instructs; so does woman.
- He displays mercy and grace; so does a woman.
- He encourages; so does a woman.
- He leads and speaks; so does a woman.

- He's the unseen One; so often this is also true of the woman (she's behind the scenes working).
- He prepares and empowers; so does a woman.
- He intercedes, testifies, and reproofs; so does a woman.

If you want to know what your duties are as a woman and/or mother, all you have to do is find out the duties of the Holy Spirit; for **you** are a type or metaphor for the Holy Spirit. This is no different than our counterpart, the man. The metaphor is similar; a righteous man should represent or display the image of our Heavenly Father. A man can look at the actions and roles of YHWH to determine his proper course in life. YHWH is his role model, and the Holy Spirit is woman's role model. BUT! We are not talking about two different gods here. They are ONE and the same. It's ludicrous to think of YHWH having a control battle with His Spirit. Therefore, men and women should work together in harmony, each displaying a facet of the image of our perfect Elohim (God). One does not dominate the other. There is no power struggle. Male and female He created them in His image.

Atmosphere & Eshet Chayil

Like the Ruach HaKodesh, **women set the tone** for the atmosphere of the home, fellowship, workplace, school, etc. As women, when we are ruled by our emotions or mood, it affects all those around us. We are a true warrior of God, an *eshet chayil*, when we choose to crucify our flesh and walk according to the Holy Spirit instead of how we *feel*. Any time a woman is present, she determines the spirit and the atmosphere many times more than does the man.

I was raised as the eldest daughter of four girls. I had no brothers growing up. As YHWH would have it, I now have two sons with no daughters. However, I have been blessed to have many nieces. When the whole family gets together, I am always fascinated by the dynamics between the boys and girls. The girls, younger and older, never fail to try and "control" what the boys do and don't do when they play together. They really are "bossy". While this bothers the boys and they sometimes refuse to play, they usually relent just to get the girls to shut-up. Moreover, they are far outnumbered when the family is together and I think they just want to keep the peace.

This little microcosm has taught me much. The sinful nature of females causes us to "force" situations to get our way. Even though **we really do know** which way to go more than men, our method of "pushing" them is all wrong. Much to men's chagrin, we are usually right, and knowing the role of *ezer kenegdo* and *eshet chayil* only confirms this. But, where we fail is in our delivery. Far too often we allow our evil inclination (sinful nature) to flow forth instead of God's Spirit of Wisdom when "guiding" our mates.

Women are just as powerful as men, but woman's power lies mostly in her influence. I don't think women realize how much they affect their own husband, children, homes, assemblies, and workplaces. If you find your home, assembly, or workplace to be a place of peace and sanctuary, look at yourself or the women that are present. They are usually directly responsible. Conversely, if you find your home, assemblies, or workplace to be stressful and chaotic, look first at the

women. They (or you) may be the culprit! Remember the two women mentioned in Proverbs? Women **are** capable of reflecting another image: one of rebellion, like the harlot or Jezebel. Women's strength (*chayil*) can be used for good or evil. Choose Life!

Think about these things the next time you guide your children (or husband). How would the Holy Spirit treat them? It wouldn't be with degrading words, strife, or manipulation. The Spirit definitely brings correction, but it is done with gentleness, a feminine trait. How much better do people respond with a kind word instead of anger? Your everyday walk requires you to be a *warrior*. And your battle is most often with yourself! Women have a lot of obstacles to overcome. We deal with hormones that often seem uncontrollable, a world that sees us as second class citizens compared to men, and relationships that usually refuse to let us operate in our God designed function. What are we to do?

I hope that as we continue to peel back the layers of Scripture you will find great freedom and gratitude in the fact that the Creator chose you to be one of His *ezer(s)*. Nobody said that being an *eshet chayil* was easy, but it is where you will find your greatest fulfillment. In later segments, we will also speak more on how both a man and a woman can walk out their redeemed roles.

In the meantime, when you find yourself feeling like the whole universe is against you, know that YHWH has a unique role and destiny just for you. If your battle is in functioning as your husband's *ezer* and he continues to resist you, know that in the end you will be restored and laughing like the Proverbs 31 woman. If your battle is with tradition and dogma within the church, and they refuse to recognize your God given gifts as applicable to women, relax. YHWH is bringing things full circle — restoration is forth coming. If your battle is with complete oppression or subjugation, take heart for though this life is like a vapor, the world to come is everlasting. In the Kingdom, nobody will be able to prevent you from being who God created you to be.

*An excellent wife (**eshet chayil**) is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rotteness in his bones. (Pr. 12:4)*

*Many daughters have done virtuously (**chayil, valiantly, mightily**), but thou excellest them all. (Pr. 31:29)*

Part VI

Ruth

There is only one woman in the Bible that is specifically called an *eshet chayil*. That woman is Ruth, the Moabitess. If it has been a while since you've read the book of Ruth, please take the time right now to read its four short chapters. This will refresh your mind about the context of her extraordinary life.

*“Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence (*eshet chayil*). (Ruth 3:11)*

The book of Ruth may be a small book, but it has great significance for people of faith. There are many thematic nuggets we could explore within its few pages. The following list is only a sample.

- Integrity & Kindness
- Protection & Prosperity
- Repentance & Redemption
- The Feast Cycle (harvests)
- Torah of Widows/Poor & Kinsmen Redeemer
- Torah for Strangers/Sojourners (They also are in Covenant)
- The Lineage of King David & Messiah Yeshua
- Blessings over Children
- Return from Exile & Restoration
- Allusions to Wedding Feast of the Lamb

With all these rich themes, is it any wonder that the Book of Ruth is read during YHWH’s feast of Shavuot (Pentecost)? *Creation Gospel* students will recognize the significance immediately: Shavuot falls on the central (main) branch of the menorah. As such, it encompasses the whole. Shavuot stands as the “servant” to all the other *moedim* (feasts). A careful read of Ruth will demonstrate this fullness. We will try to stay focused only on those themes that directly link Ruth to an *Eshet Chayil*. With so many treasures in this book, that is going to be difficult!

What’s in a Name? רות

The meaning of Ruth (Rut) is usually referred to as a *friend*. But, the Hebrew root for Ruth is the word for **shepherd** or to tend a flock; and has the idea of a neighbor or companion, often an intimate companion.

If we stop and consider Ruth’s story, we can deduce that she was indeed a shepherdess of Israel. It is her lineage that birthed King David and Messiah Yeshua, both shepherds. When we think of the relationship a shepherd has with their sheep, this notion becomes even more apparent. A (good) shepherd guards, feeds, and leads their flock. They are willing to seek out the “lost” and they will fight against dangerous predators. This sounds like the traits of an *ezer* or an *eshet chayil*, does it not?

Ruth is the only woman to receive the title *eshet chayil* by name in scripture. She received this designation BEFORE she was a mother and while she was a poor destitute widow, and a stranger (alien) in Israel.

Ruth forsook her birth place and family to join with the God of Israel and His people. Once she made this commitment, she never wavered. Her diligence caught the attention of a wealthy relative — one that could change her and her mother-in-law’s life. That relative was Boaz. It was he that declared that Ruth was an *eshet chayil*.

The circumstances surrounding this encounter and proclamation however, are quite risqué. Naomi instructs Ruth in a secret seduction plan to attract Boaz. Both Ruth and Naomi were already aware that Boaz favored Ruth. This could be seen when Boaz told Ruth to only glean from his fields.²⁷ Naomi, the admitted *bitter* woman, wanted to secure the future of her beloved daughter-in-law. The favoritism of Boaz toward Ruth must have provoked Naomi’s heart to “push/guide”²⁸ Boaz to do the right thing— offer them redemption.

But Naomi’s plan was anything but orthodox. Ruth risked her reputation and future by approaching Boaz in the middle of the night. Her actions were a reversal of cultural norms. Ruth *pursued* Boaz. It is usually the man that pursues the woman, even in today’s world. Essentially, she got all dolled up and offered herself to Boaz in a secret proposal.

*It happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, **a woman was lying at his feet**. He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your maid. So **spread your covering over your maid**, for you are a close relative.” Then he said, “May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. “Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a **woman of excellence –eshet chayil**. (Ruth 3:8-11)*

Boaz knew exactly what Ruth was asking of him. Perhaps he had even considered proposing to the Ruth. But what Naomi and Ruth did was courageous and Boaz knew it. This is why he calls her an *eshet chayil*. She was not only an upright woman in the eyes of the people and YHWH, but she was willingly to battle (in her own feminine way) for what she desired.

I believe Ruth’s brazenness only added fuel to the fire of Boaz’s growing fascination for her. He could clearly see her attentiveness in the care of her mother-in-law. It takes a special kind of woman to CHOOSE to care for a bitter person. He could also see her strong work ethic. She was driven and steadfast. These things revealed Ruth’s heart. And when Ruth came to Boaz in the night — well, let’s just say that the depth of her passion was revealed. Boaz probably couldn’t wait to become her husband!

The very next day Boaz seeks out the one person who could thwart their plans — a kinsmen that was closer to Naomi by blood than he was. But when this other man discovers that he will not only have to redeem the land but *also* marry Ruth, he concedes to Boaz. I imagine that Boaz was rejoicing on the inside at this news.

²⁷ Read all of Ruth 2.

²⁸ I hope you didn’t miss that these are the actions of an ezer and an eshet chayil.

Take note of the process Boaz goes through to acquire Ruth. He scrupulously follows the Torah (instructions/law) of YHWH. In other words, unlike fallen Adam, Boaz puts YHWH before the woman. As much as he may desire her, he faithfully obeys the proper course of action. Boaz was functioning in his “redeemed” purpose. And by the looks of things, he had no problem with allowing Ruth to function in her purpose as *ezer*. He realized that he had found an *eshet chayil*!

An eshet chayil, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. (Pr. 31:10)

While all this is true, Ruth’s actions and intentions could be distorted very easily. Some would conclude that Ruth acted as a prostitute or harlot when she approached Boaz in the middle of the night. Dr. Hollisa Alewine has some interesting thoughts.

“Feet in Scripture are sometimes used as a euphemism for genitals. To lie with a man can also be used as a euphemism for intercourse. Spreading one’s skirt over a woman carries the same implication. Lest we think Ruth was inviting something improper, be assured that sometimes a foot is just a foot! The duality and ambiguity of the expressions is what is important because it inserts the question mark as to Ruth’s virtue. Boaz clearly vindicates her righteousness, and the people and elders at the gate affirm it.”²⁹

The duality that Dr. Alewine brings up is an often overlooked theme in the Scriptures. There are many cases where the actions of a righteous person appear to be portraying the contrary. Generations before Boaz, Judah is placed in a similar situation with a woman from Canaan.³⁰

Ruth, Tamar, and Rahab

When Boaz was at the city gates before the elders claiming his right of redemption for Naomi and Ruth, the elders blessed Boaz’s obedience.

*All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. “Moreover, may your house be **like the house of Perez** whom **Tamar bore to Judah**, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman.” (Ruth 4:11-12)*

The elders draw our attention back to Boaz’s forefather, Judah. What is so reflective about the people’s blessing is that Tamar, like Ruth, sought redemption from her kinsmen. But Judah

²⁹ Alewine, Hollisa, PHD, *The Scarlet Harlot & The Crimson Thread*. London, KY: The Creation Gospel Publishing, 2012, p. 162.

³⁰ This is speaking of Tamar. Though the Bible doesn’t explicitly state that she was from Canaan, the majority of scholars and commentators deduce that this was indeed the case. Judah himself married a Canaanite woman and had a Canaanite friend. This and the fact that Judah was most likely residing in Canaan, all point to Tamar’s Canaanite ancestry. (Gen. 38)

refused to give her what was rightfully hers. If you will recall, Tamar had married two of Judah's sons but they died before producing an heir. Judah promised his youngest son to Tamar when he came of age. However, when the time came, Judah didn't keep his promise. Tamar ended up tricking or manipulating Judah to get him to do what he should have done all along: obey God's Word.

Tamar accomplished her kinsmen redemption by deceiving Judah. She dressed up as a prostitute and seduced him. Later, when Judah learned she was pregnant, he wanted to have her burned alive. However, when she proved that Judah was the father of her womb — he declared her more righteous than himself. As a result, Tamar secured the lineage of the Tribe of Judah. It is through the line of Tamar's firstborn, Perez, that Boaz, Oved, Jesse, David, and eventually the Mashiach (Messiah) would come.

*It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a **scarlet thread** on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named **Perez**. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah. (Gen. 38:27-30)*

Thus far, we have uncovered two women in the ancestry of Mashiach (Messiah) that have questionable identities. And the book of Ruth points to both. This dichotomy between a harlot and a righteous woman runs deeper still. There is another harlot/righteous woman in Mashiach's line: Rahab.

Rahab was an Amorite of the city of Jericho. She was an innkeeper and a supposed prostitute that had heard great stories about the God of Israel. When the Israeli spies came to her city, she placed her allegiance with them and YHWH by helping the spies escape safely. When the Israelites came back to take Jericho, she let down a scarlet cord from her window. The men of Israel recognized this sign and she and her family were spared. They joined Israel as sojourners. Later, Rahab marries an Israelite named Salmon, who was the father of Boaz.³¹

Now we have found three women connected to the Book of Ruth and the Messiah that appeared to be doing the actions of a harlot. Yet, we know that in the end they are each really righteous. Since we have already explored this same dichotomy of a harlot and a righteous woman (wisdom) in the Book of Proverbs, a question arises.

What is YHWH teaching us in this duality? Dr. Alewine has this to say:

*"Because the Revelation harlot is a woman, and perhaps because it is too easy to dismiss a troublesome woman with bad names or a bad reputation, we would do well to study the foundational roles of women in the Torah. Sometimes a troublesome woman who appears to be a harlot is a virtuous woman [**eshet chayil**] led by the*

³¹ Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. (Mt. 1:5)

Holy Spirit, she guides [ezer] men who stray back into the straight path. ”³²
 (Emphasis mine.)

Part VII

The Real Thing

Back in Part V, we looked at the woman as being a metaphor for the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit). There are many reasons why this is true. If you haven't read that post, please do so now before proceeding.

The following is a summary of some of the equal, but different roles of the man and woman. I've used the comparison of YHWH (the Father) and the Holy Spirit to demonstrate the ONENESS that should unify the marriage covenant. There was no hierarchy in God's original design. YHWH purposefully created a male AND a female to display His image in the creation. The list below is by no means exhaustive; we will draw more conclusions as we continue.

Man	=	Woman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembers and Obeys the Word (Action) • Needs a (spiritual) protector (an ezer) • Serves the earth • Expresses worship in work and service • Man leaves his Father and Mother and is joined to his Wife. • Is a Valiant Warrior 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of moment to moment direction of God • Protects Boundaries of Obedience • Challenges, encourages, protects, and nourishes • Blesses (benefits) her husband • Spiritual Guide • Takes Ownership of the Man • Is a Valiant Warrior
Man shows the image of Father YHWH	=	Woman shows image of Ruach HaKodesh
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father (God) is love. 1 Jn. 4:7-8 • Father is faithful. 1 Pt. 4:19 • Father is merciful. Titus 3:5 • Father delights in his children. Ps. 149:4 • Father is giving. Rom. 8:32 • Father is patient. 2 Pt. 3:8-9 • Father never forsakes his own. Gen. 28:15 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Spirit is Counselor Jn. 14:26 • Holy Spirit speaks. 1 Tim. 4:1; Acts 10:19-20 • Holy Spirit intercedes. Rom. 8:26, 34 • Holy Spirit teaches. Jn. 14:26 • Holy Spirit bears witness/testifies. Jn. 15:26-27 • Holy Spirit guides, hears, tells Jn. 16:12-13 • Holy Spirit comforts/nurtures. Jn. 14:16; 15:26 • Holy Spirit opposes. Acts 16:6-7

³² Alewine, Hollisa, PHD, *The Scarlet Harlot & The Crimson Thread*. London, KY: The Creation Gospel Publishing, 2012, p. 54.

Redeemed Marriage

It is not good for man to be alone. He NEEDS an *ezer kenegdo* — a protector that opposes him. This is why he is the one that leaves the guardianship of his mother and father and cleaves to his wife — *his new guardian*. The woman will set boundaries that are necessary for the man to stay obedient. It is in this way that she takes ownership responsibility of the man like the woman in the Song of Songs. Dr. Moen expresses it this way:

She is exactly what he needs in order to be what God calls him to be...Her greatest longing is to be his greatest defense. She is built for that and it will not be denied, even if the direction is misplaced...In God's perfect world, she takes ownership responsibility for her man, and he welcomes it because he knows she is uniquely designed to bring about what is best for him. She is ready and willing to set aside every other agenda in order to bless him with her care. (Guardian Angel p.345)

If there was no hierarchy in the beginning, then men are only the “head” in the sense of order in the creation, not rank. While this rubs against a lot of traditional theology, I urge you to explore this idea more fully before rejecting it off hand³³.

If man was meant to rule over women from the beginning, why does Paul in Ephesians chapter 5 instruct the women to *submit* to their husbands? Carefully consider this. We mustn't allow current doctrine or tradition to define this for us; rather, we must take the whole of Scripture into consideration and let it interpret itself. Though the difference may be “subtle”, it has far reaching implications. The woman must choose to give her husband authority as we must also choose to give Messiah (Christ) authority over our lives. A man doesn't naturally possess the position of head by the simple fact that he is *male*.

So why does the wife submit? This action only works properly if the man also does what Paul requires: *love his wife*. If a man really loves a woman, he's willing to do anything for her—even die. This is a selfless type of love. If a woman is loved in this way, she naturally gives the man authority. She trusts that he will always have her best interests at heart. The authority she gives protects her; it doesn't control or silence her.

So why are men told to *love*? Men are instructed to do this because in the fallen nature they naturally distrust women. This is why they instinctively place themselves as the (dominating) authority. This is a self-preservation technique. Somewhere deep down, they fear the woman is going to betray them. Therefore, they have great difficulty in giving themselves completely to their wives. Adam must learn to trust Chavah (Eve).

In order for this to happen, Adam must first forgive Eve for misguiding him. He must literally place his life back into the hands of his *ezer*. This only functions as a two-way street. As many marriage self-help books attest, these two roles are reciprocal. If they fail to come together, there will be no unity. No oneness. Dr. Moen puts it this way:

³³ This is a great article by Dr. Moen that speaks to this issue: <http://skipmoen.com/2013/09/07/head-trips-reminder/>

The wife grants authority to the husband and voluntarily submits to him knowing that it is in her best interests to do so BECAUSE the husband sacrifices his own interest in order to offer all that he is for her wellbeing. Both of these acts of self-denial model the character of God. (Guardian Angel p.346)

When Disputes Arise

Dr. Moen calls the restored marriage roles we've been discussing "Redeemed Marriage". I like his term and will use it from this point to describe such. I added this little section to offer a few ideas of what to do when issues arise in those marriages *where the man and woman are each doing their best to walk in restoration.*

There are thousands and probably millions of things in our daily lives that could spark a dispute between a man and wife. Married couples are all too familiar with this truth. The difference in happy couples and unhappy couples is usually in how they speak to and treat one another when things do happen. Though everyone will have a bad day on occasion, couples of faith should have less.

The short answer is *humility*— of course, isn't it always? Put your mate before yourself! Stop feeling sorry for yourself and having pity parties — these emotions are coming from PRIDE. Crucify your flesh and serve your spouse. By the way, that's the answer to far more than marriage quibbles, but I digress.

While the short answer is much easier said than done, it should be our FIRST response. Squash the flesh! But sometimes there are issues where we simply can't "turn the other cheek". In those situations, it is best that both parties unify and decide TOGETHER. Nobody should have a veto stamp unless one party is mentality injured, diseased, or compromised in some way.

Generally though, a man must listen to his *ezer* — she can save him from a multitude of regrets. That's her God designed purpose, remember? She is his guardian and protector. But also a man that loves his wife may have to save or protect her — mostly *from herself!* It is in these times that she must remember why she chose to submit to her husband — he has HER best interests at heart. The bottom line is motivation. What is your motive in winning this argument or battle? Is it self-serving? Will your spouse benefit or will you?

I realize these "solutions" are very broad and that we are all in different places. So please keep that in mind and the fact that these actions require BOTH spouses to be in faith and agreement to walk out a Redeemed Marriage. There are many couples where only one spouse is willing or trying to reach restoration. I am praying for you and encourage you to never give up. Keep seeking after YHWH and place your focus on improving yourself, not your spouse. Though it doesn't make sense to our natural mind, this is the only way real change is accomplished. Be the best spouse *you* can be.

The Real World

How do the “redeemed” roles of a man and woman translate outside of marriage? Are women meant to stay uneducated and at home? What about in our assemblies? Are women to keep their mouths shut lest they “enlighten” the superior males present? Some would scream a resounding “yes” to all or most of these questions. But based on what we’ve learned about women from the Tanakh, is that the heart of YHWH?

My hope is that the previous six posts in this series have given you some meat to chew on. Most often, books or teachings about a woman’s biblical role begin *in the end*. By that, I mean they tend to ignore the entire first three quarters of the Bible (the Tanakh or O.T.) and focus solely on last quarter (N.T.).

Is there any other book in the world where people BEGIN their reading or research three quarters of the way into the material? I don’t believe there is, with the exception of an encyclopedia or a dictionary. But the Bible is not a reference book. It is the Book of Life. Only the enemy of our souls could deceive us so openly. He has done a fine job of keeping Christians away from the beginning and the foundation.

By focusing only on the last quarter of the Bible, one would expect multiple opposing doctrines, teachings, and positions. Each culture (nation, people, and race) would bring their own bias and traditions into practice. This would provoke a multitude of creeds, formulas, and proof texts to support their particular branch. We see all these things in Christianity. Could this be because we have divorced ourselves from the foundation?

The Bible was written by Hebrews. It is within their culture, language, and tradition that our Adonai (Lord) sovereignly chose to reveal Himself. The Savior, Yeshua (Jesus), was/is a Torah observant Jew. His daily life did not deviate from this setting. A careful read of the New Testament reveals that each writer has this same testimony. While they may have challenged the traditions and laws of men, they never questioned the Law of YHWH.

This is the reason I began this series in the beginning, Bereshit (Genesis). If we don’t understand Paul’s standard (the Torah), how can we properly interpret some answer (of which we don’t even have the questions) that he gave in the first century? These are reasonable questions to consider.

Yeshua and Paul would have never strayed from the Torah, Prophets, or Writings (the only Bible available to people living in the first century). Instead, they consistently point us *back* to the beginning for answers.³⁴ But, shaking off centuries of tradition is no simple feat. Even many western women struggle with the ramifications of what it means to be an *ezer kenegdo* or an *eshet chayil*. Sometimes our shackles give us a false sense of comfort and security. To add insult to injury, modern feminism is a twisted counterfeit of God’s original design.

³⁴ Some examples: Rom. 16:20, 1 Cor. 6:16; 11:9; 11:12; 15:22, 2 Cor. 4:6; 11:3, 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 4:3-4.

My desire is for God's people to repent and return to the Garden of Eden. Women (and men) will only be truly fulfilled in their relationships when we do things God's way. This is not to be confused with traditional church teachings or creeds. Manmade laws are NOT God's laws.

But I must warn you: YHWH's Word is OFFENSIVE. It offends sinners. It offends self-righteous "churchmen"; and it especially offends religious spirits. Gloria Steinem was right about one thing, "*The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off.*" But that's only if we are humble enough to allow the Word to change our hearts. So many would rather fight tooth and nail to cling onto the façade of truth rather than relent to the real thing.

A Woman Shall Encompass a Man

Instead of making a list of the roles that women fulfilled in the Bible, I think it is best to go back to the chart in the beginning of this article. Prayerfully look at the attributes of the Holy Spirit, for a woman will naturally reflect these works/roles. This will be true whether your theology accepts it or not. YHWH designed the woman in this way — no one can change that, not even church laws and creeds. A woman will be an *ezer* in harmony with her husband or she will be an *ezer* covertly coaxing her husband. The choice is up to her Adam— *for she will always be an ezer*. Will he forgive her and trust her or will he continue to resist her?

As we look through the pages of Scripture, we see women functioning in nearly every role of the man. Many draw the conclusion that these instances are exceptions to the rule and that women only stepped into these positions when a man was unwilling to fulfill his role. But perhaps YHWH put these examples there to ensure that fallen Adam would not be able to draw absolute control over Eve. Perhaps this was the Father's way of protecting His daughters and their unique design and purpose.

Jeremiah 31 is a chapter of great importance. In it, we have the only plain prophecy about the New Covenant.³⁵ But if we go back and reread the entire section, we can easily see that the New Covenant hasn't happened in its fullness — *not yet*. Not every man knows YHWH and we are still teaching the world about our great Elohim (God). Moreover, we have not yet been gathered into the land, ending our exile.³⁶ But there is one verse I'd especially like to draw your attention to:

How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. (Jer. 31:22)

While Christian Bible interpretation is often limited, Hebrew is not. In other words, prophecy is multifaceted and dynamic. No interpretation supersedes another. There are usually greater and lesser fulfillments and each are true. The verse in question is often taught to mean a woman's womb shall encompass a man — the Son of Man to be more specific. And I believe this is very

³⁵ Jer. 31:31-33; Heb. 8:8-12

³⁶ Jer. 31:8-21

true! Messiah's work and atonement are central to not only our redemption, but also our restoration of which this passage speaks.

However, that in no way detracts from the literal interpretation of this passage. If this whole section is about our complete restoration, then what does it mean for “*a woman to encompass a man*”? Could this be an allusion to the Garden of Eden? A return to God's original design for man and WOMAN? The Hebrew word for “new” in this verse is the same word for “new” in Jeremiah 31:31 in reference to the New Covenant. It is *chadash*. The AHLB³⁷ describes it this way:

Strongs #2319: AHLB#: 2151) Renew: New moon: New: The first crescent of the moon as the renewal of the moon, the first day of the month. [from: restoration] To make something like new through repair, restoration, or replacement. [freq. 10] {str: 2318} New: Something that is new, renewed, restored or repaired. [freq. 54] |kjb: new, fresh| {str: 2319, 2323}

Chadash implies renewal, like the monthly renewal of the moon. The moon isn't brand new every month, instead it is renewed. This is the language and understanding of the New Covenant. It is the same as the previous covenant — *renewed*. This is solidified by the fact that YHWH's Torah (law) will be written on the hearts of His people.³⁸ In reference to the woman encompassing a man, YHWH also calls this a “renewed” thing. In other words, this is a restoration.

Do you recall the function of the female? She is a boundary setter. She is an *ezer* that surrounds her husband in protection, counsel, and guidance. Her God designed purpose is to surround or encompass her man. As we progress toward our complete redemption and restoration, we come closer and closer to the garden. Adam will forgive Chavah. She will be restored to her proper role. This, I believe, is one of the prophetic layers found in Jeremiah 31:22.

Moreover, in Jewish tradition, this passage has been used for centuries during wedding ceremonies. When the bride arrives at the *chuppah*³⁹, she circles the groom seven times while the groom prays. This symbolizes the idea of the woman being a protective, surrounding light for her husband and their household. She illuminates them with understanding and love and protects them from harm from the outside.

There are several interpretations of the significance of her encircling the groom seven times. Seven is the number of days of the creation, and the wedding ceremony is the creation of a new household. Seven is the number of times the phrase “*when a man takes a wife*” occurs in the Bible. Seven is the number of times Joshua circled the walls of Jericho in order to bring them down, and in circling her groom a bride brings down any wall that may remain between them.

Also, on the day of his wedding, the groom is compared to a king. Just as the king is encircled by his legion, the groom is to be encircled by his bride. This symbolizes that the bride is a type of

³⁷ Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible by Jeff Benner.

³⁸ Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10

³⁹ A covered wedding canopy. The covering is usually a large prayer shawl (tallit).

“warrior/protector” for the man. She is his *eshet chayil*. When the bride has finished encircling the groom, she stands at his right, as the Psalmist states, “*at the right hand does the queen stand.*”⁴⁰

While all the above reasons are given in Jewish tradition for this mystical practice, I believe there is one last purpose that the bride encircles the man seven times. **It is because she is a type of the Holy Spirit in the man’s life.** There are seven manifestations of the Holy Spirit as we discussed in Part V. A woman of faith will walk in these spirits⁴¹ in order to guide and protect her husband and home.

My prayer is that we will humbly strive towards restoration and obedience to the whole counsel of YHWH in matters of faith, marriage, and community. May we return to the garden and find the original man and woman of shalom. May the two become One. I leave you to meditate on the following verses.

***“Who is this, shining forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun” —
but formidable as an army marching under banners?***

Come back, come back, girl from Shulam (shalom, peace, safety, fullness, complete)! Come back, come back to where we can see you! What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the dance of two army camps.

(Song of Songs 6:10,13)

⁴⁰ Ps. 45:9

⁴¹ Dr. Alewine’s Creation Gospel will teach you how to walk in the seven Spirits of Adonai; and perhaps even more importantly, help you to recognize when you are not!