

The Mystery of the Marriage of Messiah and the New Covenant

by Joshua

We live in the last days, the latter days; the days which the apostle Paul (in his second letter to Timothy) said would be “perilous times”. He said that men would be:

lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy; Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. — 2 Timothy 3:2-5

Of course, we can see examples of all these things continually around us now, and it has perhaps been so for a long time. In addition to these various forms of wickedness being prevalent, he goes on to say that in the last days people would be:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was. — 2 Timothy 3:7-9



Jannes and Jambres,¹ are the names of Pharaoh's magicians who fought against Moses in Egypt. They were the sons of the prophet Balaam, and were with him² when he fought against Moses and the Israelites at the beckoning of Balak, the king of Moab. The interesting thing about these verses is that in the last days, Paul says, there will likewise be men who will fight against Moses and resist the truth, but they will be corrupt in their minds and reprobate concerning the truth. After warning about persecutions, Paul goes on to encourage Timothy:

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. — 2 Timothy 3:14-17

The “holy scriptures” that Paul is referring to does not include the New Testament at all. The “scriptures” of Paul and Timothy consisted of the Tanakh, or Hebrew Old Testament, along with a collection of other books that we now call, Apocrypha. The foundation of our scriptures (both ancient and modern) is the Torah or the Five Books of Moses.

¹ Altho these names appear in the New Testament, they do not appear in the Torah. They are however mentioned in the Targums of Exodus and Numbers and in the Book of Jasher 79:27.

² See Numbers 22:22

These are the standards to which everything following must harmonize. The New Testament uses the word, scripture(s), 52 times, never speaking of itself. Yet, Paul says they can, "make thee wise unto salvation".

I haven't the time to get into many of the details about the writings of Paul in the New Testament, and the Greek and Roman interpretations of his words which have informed Christian tradition for almost the past 2,000 years. I will mention one very unique thing about the Apostle Paul however, and that is this: he is the only author of scripture that we are warned about by another author of scripture.

It is not uncommon for scripture authors to quote one another. The Bible is the world's oldest hyperlinked text. It refers to itself tens of thousands of times (and even hundreds of thousands of times by some counts). In the Book of Mormon we have Jesus telling us to study the words of Isaiah (3 Nephi 23:1), then a few verses later he tells us to study the rest of the prophets too (3 Nephi 23:5).

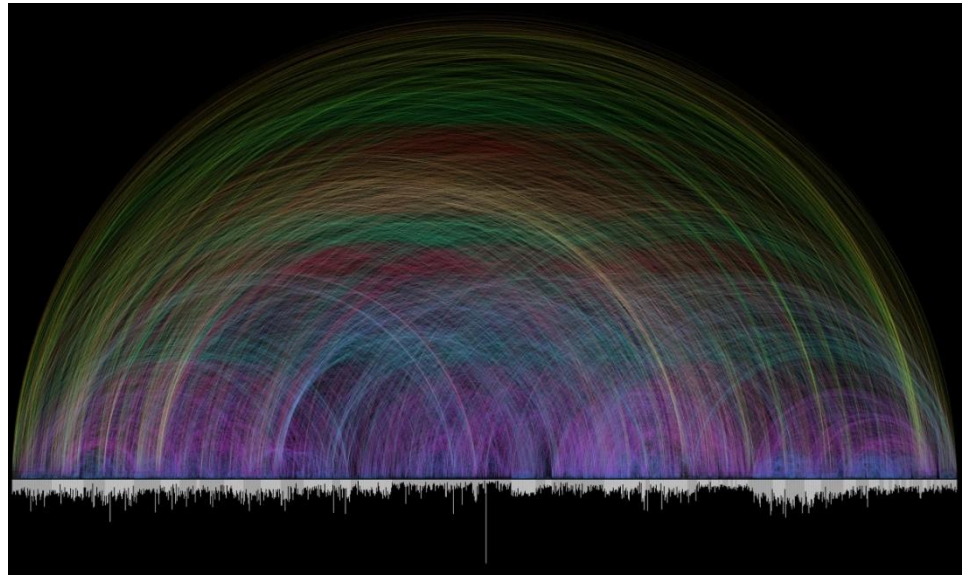
Right in the middle of Malachi (who is also recommended specifically by Jesus, see 3 Nephi 24-25) chapter 4, which is a Mormon favorite about the great and dreadful day which shall burn as an oven, the coming of the LORD, and the Latter Day mission of Elijah to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, lest the whole earth be wasted and smitten with a curse. Right in the middle of that chapter are these amazing words:

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. — Malachi 4:4 (see also 3 Nephi 25:4)

Scriptures have many meanings. When we think of the mission of Elijah, as Mormons, we think of the sealing of generations. This is certainly correct, but it is not the only meaning. Yet another meaning is what Malachi 4:4 says: that latter day Israel should remember (remember being synonymous with "keep"³) the Law of Moses, and teach our children to do the same (which is a part of the Law⁴). This is part of what will prevent the earth from being utterly wasted at his coming! This additional interpretation is supported not only by the original context, but also by modern revelation in Doctrine and Covenants:

...seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; And again [or in other words], the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me. — Doctrine & Covenants 98:16-17

So, Malachi recommends Moses, and we see these kinds of quotations and recommendations thruout the scriptures. In the case of Paul however, we have a warning from the Apostle Peter. In speaking of the writings of Paul he says:



The Bible as a hyperlinked text. The bar graph at the bottom represents the chapters (the lines are proportional to the number of verses in each chapter). The books are shown by alternating white and gray bar graphs. Each arc represents a link between verses. The colors are related to the length between the quotations.

³ To remember has connotations of doing as a result of the remembering. Thus, when God "remembers" his covenant with Noah (Gen 9:15), or his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Lev 26:42), he does not merely recollect this information about the past. Rather, he is saying that he will keep, and fulfill those covenants. Likewise, when God asks us to remember certain aspects of his words, he not merely wanting us to recollect, but to reenact and do according to our remembrance.

⁴ See: Gen 18:19; Exo 12:24-27; Deut 4:9, 6:6-7, 11:19; Prov 22:6; Isa 59:21

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. — 2 Peter 3:16-17

Summarizing, Peter is warning us ahead of time that Paul's letters have things that are technical, and hard to understand, and that his words are being twisted and misapplied by those who are ignorant and unstable. He does not say that Paul's words, in and of themselves, are bad; rather, he warns us not to allow the misapplication of Paul's words to lead us into the error "of the wicked". This is the wording of the King James, with which we are all most familiar. However, the Greek word, *athesmōn* (ἄθεσμων), has a range of meanings, and in many other translations⁵ is rendered as, the error "of the lawless" (or in other words, the error of Torahless).

This is the particular variety of wickedness that Peter is warning us not to fall into; he warning us not to be confused by Paul's writings and fall into the error of Torahlessness. There is a constant tension in Paul's words between trying to convince people that the Torah will not save them, because that this is Messiah's job (which is true), but that this does not imply that the Torah is useless or done away. We must read Paul's words in context of the scriptures (the Torah), and carefully parse out his technical meanings.

With that introduction, today I would like to speak about marriage in the Torah, and one aspect in particular.

The Torah begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth. Day after day, everything in creation is pronounced, "tov" (or "good"). Only after a lone male was placed in the garden does God say that something was, "lo-tov". It was "not good" for man to be alone. From the Israelite point of view, a male does not deserve the title of "Man" until he is married. For it is written:

Male and female he created them. And in the day they were created, he blessed them, and called their name Adam. — Genesis 5:2, (see also Moses 6:9)

Speaking on Marriage Brigham Young remarked:

The whole subject of the marriage relation is not in my reach, nor in any other man's reach on this earth. It is without beginning of days or end of years; it is a hard matter to reach. We can tell some things with regard to it; it lays the foundation for worlds, for angels, and for the Gods; for intelligent beings to be crowned with glory, immortality, and eternal lives. In fact, it is the thread which runs from the beginning to the end of the holy Gospel of salvation—of the Gospel of the Son of God; it is from eternity to eternity. When the vision of the mind is opened, you can see a great portion of it, but you see it comparatively as a speaker sees the faces of a congregation. To look at, and talk to, each individual separately, and thinking to become fully acquainted with them, only to spend five minutes with each would consume too much time, it could not easily be done. So it is with the visions of eternity; we can see and understand, but it is difficult to tell. —Journal of Discourses 2:90

Marriage, as we know, is essential to exaltation, and the single most important kind of marriage that each of us ought to be striving to be a part of is: The Marriage of Christ and the church!

Both Old and New Testaments are full of this wedding imagery used to describe the relationship between Yehovah and his people. While this is not the only metaphor used to describe this relationship (Israel is a son,⁶ and a servant⁷ as well), it is perhaps the most expressive of the joy and anticipation of this future fulfillment of Sukkot. The Wedding of the Beloved Bridegroom and his Bride is the culmination of thousands of years of anticipation, and prophetic promise.⁸ In fact, the marriage supper of the Lamb is the climax of the series of events recorded by John in his vision of the last days.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they

⁵ See: NIV, ESV, NRSV, GNT, ISV, and many others.

⁶ Exodus 4:22, Hosea 11:1, etc

⁷ Isaiah 41:8

⁸ There are many from the past and future and from the east and west, who shall sit down at that feast with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, at that feast, when the kingdom of heaven comes (Matthew 8:11).

which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
– Revelation 19:7-9

Who is this bride? She is us; she is the saints. We are all members of her body,⁹ and with what is this body arrayed? Clean, white, fine linen, which is representative of the righteousness of the saints. Like any bride to be, we want to look as attractive as possible for our husband to be. Since we love him, we want to please him and be attractive to him. If you love me, keep my commandments,¹⁰ Jesus says. It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us,¹¹ Moses says.

Many years ago my wife Charlotte asked if I had a preference about whether she wears skirts or pants. I expressed my preference for skirts, and in a successful effort to please me she has, with rare exception, worn skirts ever since. However, given that this is not the normal fashion these days, she received a surprising level of pushback from close friends and family about the change in her fashion habits. One response she got was that she should not wear a skirt everyday because: if you look at the fashions of the wives of the LDS apostles, they don't wear skirts every day; therefore, she shouldn't either. On another occasion, when she told some friends, they were offended that her husband would express a preference for how she dresses. Charlotte thought the responses from these other women were so strange! Who were they dressing for, and who were they trying to look good for, if not their own husbands? Regardless of whether their own husbands preferred pants or skirts, stripes or prints, denim or silk, wouldn't they want to be attractive to him?

As a bride to God, our raiment is our righteousness, but our righteousness is not our own. In speaking of our marriage to Yehovah, Ezekiel said:

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD God, and thou becamest mine...I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the LORD God.
– Ezekiel 16:8, 10-14

Our righteousness is in him and in his Law; the Torah which he gave us:

And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.
– Deuteronomy 6:25

The garments that are pleasing to him are the ones he gave to us – even if they are not the fashion of the day, even if religious (or political) leaders are not wearing them, and even if society in general is offended that we would want to please our husband-to-be, and look attractive to him.

In the 5th chapter of Paul's epistle to Ephesians, he is giving some beautiful, metaphorical teachings about marriage. He speaks about the roles of men and women, the creation of Adam and Eve, the symbolism of the body, and the marriage of Christ and the church.

At the conclusion of his commentary he remarks:

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
– Ephesians 5:32

There are no doubt many mysteries contained in these metaphorical teachings, and I intend to make it a little more mysterious by tying in Passover and First Fruits with the marriage of Messiah and his people. This connection has already been hinted at in the earlier passages of scripture that refer to the Marriage "of the Lamb". Of all the lambs

⁹ The New Testament also says that we are members of the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-14). There are additional meanings here no doubt; however, even with this usage, the sense of this word (the "body" of Christ) can be understood in the same way that Eve is described as being Adam's body – she is his flesh and bones.

¹⁰ John 14:15

¹¹ Deuteronomy 6:25

mentioned in scripture, the Passover is surely the most prominent and meaningful. Thus, the marriage of Israel to Yehovah, is already bound to be connected to Passover imagery.



Allow me to briefly review Passover and Firstfruits. Israel was commanded to observe the Passover forever thruout their generations.¹² Every generation is commanded to tell their children how Yehovah freed them when they were slaves in Egypt. Thousands of years after the Exodus, we are still commanded to tell our children how the LORD freed us personally from Egypt.¹³ This remembrance of a literal liberation from physical

bondage, plagues, and tyranny, by the death of the lamb, points us to an additional spiritual reality which is our freedom from sin and spiritual death by the same means.

Our Jewish friends may frown on this idea because, while there are sacrifices for “sin”, nowhere is the Passover explicitly connected to forgiveness of sins. And yet, among the Hebrew prophets, there is always an intimate connection between physical and spiritual deliverance. So this is not a uniquely Christian interpretation. Indeed, there is both a physical and spiritual significance to Passover.¹⁴ Volumes have been written on this, and this is only the briefest of overviews.

Israel has likewise been commanded to observe Firstfruits forever thruout their generations,¹⁵ and likewise Firstfruits has both physical and spiritual significance. The physical fulfillment is connected to the beginning of the harvest season – specifically the harvest of the barley. Given the climate of Israel, this harvest begins sometime near Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When the harvest begins, no one is allowed to eat any of the grain until the Firstfruits offering has been made. In a spiritual sense, Firstfruits is connected to the resurrection of Yeshua, and his presentation to his Father. Just as the remainder of the physical barley cannot be harvested and eaten until the first sheaf of grain is offered up, so also, the rest of the resurrection of the dead cannot happen until after Yeshua is first resurrected and presented. This is why Paul refers to Yeshua as the Firstfruits of the resurrection; the “Firstfruits of them that slept”.¹⁶



Thus, the spiritual meaning of Passover and Firstfruits is primarily pointing to the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and, by extension, the possibility of our own freedom from sin and death.

Let us lay aside the feasts for a moment and talk about some of the laws relating to Israelite marriage. This should interest us if we consider ourselves Israelites, and especially if we desire to be the bride of Messiah. Specifically, I want to lay out who Israelites are allowed to marry, if they are keeping the commandments in the Torah. First, and

¹² Exodus 12:14

¹³ Exodus 13:8

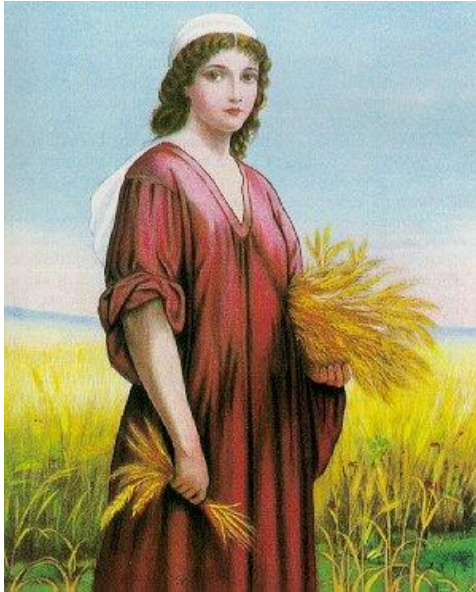
¹⁴ D&C 29:34

¹⁵ Lev23:14

¹⁶ 1 Cor 15:20,23

most obviously (but also significantly), Israelite men cannot marry a woman who is married to another man.¹⁷ Israelite women do not have the same prohibition. This is essentially the very definition of adultery – a man may not sleep with a woman who is another man’s wife (nor betrothed¹⁸). Note that while adultery can be committed by both sexes, and the punishment is the same for both parties, the definition is asymmetrical and depends only on the marital status of the woman.¹⁹

Next, Israelite women are only to marry Israelite men.²⁰ Occasionally, Israelite women were further restricted to marrying within their specific tribe.²¹ The men are likewise only allowed to marry Israelite women, but there are some relevant and nuanced distinctions. This prohibition is repeated numerous times beginning with Abraham²² and Isaac²³ getting wives for their sons.



One distinction between men and women in marriage laws comes with the case of converts from other nations. There were restrictions placed upon other nations becoming Israelite. There were eternal restrictions placed upon intermarriage with the Canaanite nations for example.²⁴ Likewise for the Amalekites.²⁵ Edomites and Egyptians were kept out till their third generation,²⁶ and Moabites and Ammonites were kept out till their 11th generation.²⁷

Nevertheless, we have a timely²⁸ example of Ruth, who was a Moabitess, and yet became the levirate²⁹ wife of Boaz. There are at least two ways of harmonizing these seeming conflicting commandments.³⁰

The first way I will mention is more general in that it applies to all positive (“thou shalt”) and negative (“thou shalt not”) commandments. The harmonization goes like this: whenever a positive command is contradicted by a negative command, the positive command takes precedence. For example, we are commanded not to work on the Sabbath – a negative command, but Israel was also commanded to offer a daily

¹⁷ Whether or not adultery has been committed depends exclusively on the marital status of the woman. The marital status of the man has nothing to do with it. He may be married or single, divorced or widowed; it is all inconsequential.

¹⁸ Deuteronomy 22:23-24

¹⁹ Every single instance of adultery in the scripture where the marital status of either party is mentioned makes reference to the marriage or betrothal of the woman. See Leviticus 20:10; Proverbs 2:16-19; Proverbs 5:3,20; Proverbs 6:26-32; Jeremiah 29:23; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 3:1; Hosea 4:13-14; Romans 7:2-3; Genesis 20:2-6,9; etc.

²⁰ Deuteronomy 7:3, Nehemiah 13:25-27

²¹ Numbers 36:6 This case arose when a certain man, Zelophehad, had only daughters. The worry was that if they inherited their father’s land (which was their right), they might marry outside their tribe, thus removing the inheritance of one tribe to another, which would be contrary to the original intent that the inheritances remain with each tribe in perpetuity.

²² Genesis 24:3

²³ Genesis 26:34-35; Genesis 28:1-5

²⁴ Deuteronomy 7:1-4

²⁵ Deuteronomy 25:17-19

²⁶ Deuteronomy 23:7-8

²⁷ Deuteronomy 23:3 (this restriction may also be interpreted as everlasting, but till the 11th generation is the most generous interpretation).

²⁸ Ruth is a timely example because her courtship and marriage to Boaz occurred at the time of Shavuot.

²⁹ Levirate marriage is when a man dies without an heir and his widow is married to his brother (or other near kinsman) in order to preserve his family line. See Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

³⁰ There are certainly other ways of harmonizing seeming contradictions. Often contradictions are only apparently so, but further study and inspiration will reveal the key to rightly divide the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). For example, another way to harmonize the commandments to rest on the Sabbath, and to offer sacrifices on the same, is to understand that the specific wording of the commandment does not actually prohibit *all* work, only *our* work. We are allowed to do the LORD’s work on the Sabbath.

Exodus 20:8-10 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all **your** work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God...”

sacrifice (morning and evening) – a positive command; thus, the priests would offer the daily sacrifice (which was work) even on Shabbat, because the positive command takes precedence.

Here is another example particularly meaningful to Mormons: Adam and Eve were commanded not to partake of the forbidden fruit – a negative command, but also to multiply and replenish the earth – a positive command. In the case of Ruth and Boaz there is a negative commandment, thou shalt not marry a Moabite, and a positive commandment, thou shalt marry thy brother's childless widow, and the positive commandment takes precedence.

A second way to harmonize these passages is to understand that many commandments are gender specific, and that there are many asymmetries between the sexes in the commandments. When we read the verse in English:

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: – Deuteronomy 23:3

We do not read any asymmetry into the prohibition because English is not a gendered language, for the most part. In contrast, Hebrew is very gendered. In the verse above, the words for Ammonite and Moabite are both masculine in the original language. The Hebrew word for a Moabite male is Mo-aw-vee' (מוֹאָבִי). In Hebrew, the masculine forms can be used to refer strictly to males, but also to mixed gender groups, depending on the context. The feminine form (which is the form used to refer to Ruth) is Mo-aw-vee'-ah (מוֹאָבִיָּה) or Mo-aw-veet' (מוֹאָבִית). Therefore, this verse may be interpreted to mean an exclusive prohibition on males. This would not be unusual given the patrilineal descent practices seen among the ancient Israelite tribes, and this is also the way that the ancient rabbis understood this passage. Thus, a bride may be a convert,³¹ and grafted in, but not the groom; he must be an established, pure-blooded Israelite (I hope we are keeping our eyes and ears open to spiritual truths relating to the marriage of the Lamb).³²

Altho there is a modern practice among Jews to render descent according to the mother, Biblically, the bloodline of children was determined patrilineally.³³ The change from a patrilineal to a matrilineal based principle for the offspring of mixed unions of Israelite and Gentile took place in the 1st century.³⁴

When we talk about the priests, there are additional restrictions in order to preserve the purity of priestly families. Priest that violate these restrictions are liable to have themselves and their descendants expelled from the priesthood.³⁵ The prohibitions on marriage candidates for priest are found in Leviticus 21. For regular priests they are forbidden from marrying harlots, profane women (which may or may not be the same thing as a harlot – see Lev 21:9 this may mean women who are not prostitutes, but have had sex outside of marriage.), and women who have been divorced (Leviticus 21:7). The prohibitions for high priests include the same categories, but are interestingly listed in the reverse order, with the additional restriction on widows, and the requirement that the brides be virgins (Leviticus 21:13-14). However, Ezekiel seems to allow an exception to these additional requirements if the woman is the widow of a priest (Ezekiel 44:22).³⁶



³¹ For another example see Deuteronomy 21:10-14 which describes taking a wife from among captives of war. Obviously, this is referring to foreign nations.

³² Israel, as a woman, was certainly not allowed to go looking for non-Israelite gods to be their husband. Likewise, Israel was not to seek to convert their God, Yehovah, into one of the pagan gods by incorporating pagan worship practices into the worship of Yehovah (see Deuteronomy 12).

³³ All the Biblical genealogies are based on paternal lines. The tribes are based on paternal lines, and the Levitical priesthood was likewise passed from father to son – as opposed to mother to son.

³⁴ Probably in the aftermath of the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and Leontopolis (73 A.D.).

³⁵ See, Ezra 2:62

³⁶ It is interesting to note that in the genealogy of Yeshua he has four mothers who seem to fail many of these qualifications: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary. However, there are ways to harmonize these seeming contradictions.

Back to the Death and Resurrection of Yeshua: Why did Jesus have to die? To satisfy the demands of Justice in our behalf.³⁷ That seems to be easier to understand than the other half of the question which is: Why was he resurrected? Why couldn't we just live in heaven, in God's presence, as spiritual beings, and leave our physical bodies behind?

There are multiple answers to this question but one reason was to prove that he has ultimate power over sin, and thus ultimate power to save. This concept was taught by Yeshua, tho on a lesser scale, in the case of the paralytic man who was brought to him. Upon seeing the man Yeshua pronounces his sins forgiven. After some mutterings about blasphemy, Yeshua asks which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven, or to say rise up and walk? To heal physical or spiritual sickness and disease? Then, to prove that he had authority to forgive sins (which only God can do), he heals the man on the spot.³⁸ Thus, he was resurrected to prove that he had power over hell.

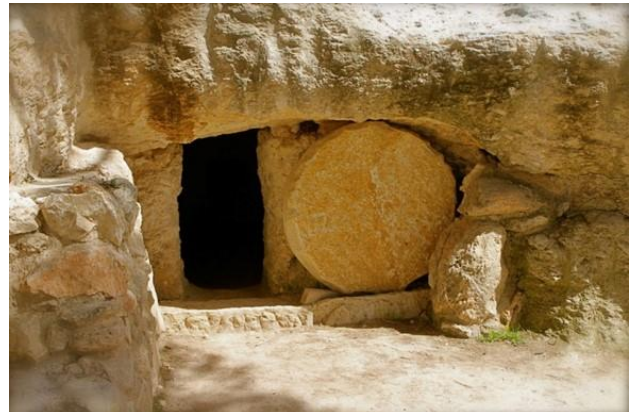
Speaking of salvation, Joseph Smith said:

Salvation is nothing more nor less than to triumph over all our enemies and put them under our feet. And when we have power to put all enemies under our feet in this world, and a knowledge to triumph over all evil spirits in the world to come, then we are saved, as in the case of Jesus, who was to reign until He had put all enemies under His feet, and the last enemy was death.³⁹

– Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 297

Another answer to the question of why Yeshua was resurrected could be that it was what Justice demanded. The wages of sin is death,⁴⁰ but he was sinless, and thus not worthy of death. Therefore, Justice requires that his life be restored.

Our Christian and even Jewish brethren might agree with us on those points, but of course Mormonism has some unique things to say about the importance of our bodies. Our bodies are simultaneously a power and an advantage to us, as well as a limitation and a prison. We are in prison either in or out of our bodies.⁴¹ Of course, much of this dichotomy is a result of mortality, and will be resolved when our bodies are glorified. There are things we cannot do without bodies, and one of them is very pertinent to the topic at hand: We cannot have marriage and children without bodies. Our eternal increase is tied to our dual natures as beings both of spirit and of matter.



Another answer, which was very simply put by Paul is that: Christ died so that we can live together with him (1 Thessalonians 5:10). But why is the resurrection needed for that? Again, couldn't we just live with him as spirits? The answer to this lies partly in the fact that he doesn't *just* want to live with us, he also wants to marry us! He is dying to be our husband – he wants to be one with us – he wants at-one-ment. This is not saying anything about our desirability, but rather about his mercy, loving-kindness, and condescension.

We need to talk about the Bride a bit, for the reason that much of modern Christianity believes in a replacement theology. That is, they believe that Israel, as a people, and as a nation, have become irrelevant to God's plan, and have been replaced by the Church, which is spiritual, and has superseded the physical (and therefore debased) Israel.⁴²

There is some controversy about this in Christianity, but by and large there is a distinct "us and them" mentality which has led to Christians committing many atrocities both large and small. This is not so in the Restoration. We thank the Jews, remember them and their sufferings, understand that they are still God's ancient covenant people, understand

³⁷ There are various theories of the Atonement; for example: Moral Influence Theory, Ransom Theory, Christus Victor, Satisfaction Theory, Penal Substitutionary Theory, etc. Many of these theories describe different facets of the Atonement and are not necessarily exclusive of one another.

³⁸ See Mark 2:1-12 and Matthew 9:1-8

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

⁴⁰ Romans 6:23

⁴¹ D&C 45:17; 138:50

⁴² Because the Church has superseded Israel, this idea is also called Supersessionism. It is also known as Replacement Theology or Fulfillment Theology.

that he has not forgotten his covenant with them,⁴³ and understand that we (who are among the gentiles) must be grafted⁴⁴ into them, and numbered among them, in order to receive the blessings promised to Israel.⁴⁵

At least part of the reason for this dichotomy, in the minds of many Christians, is the recent historical difference in language between the Old and New Testaments.⁴⁶ When we look at several of the most popular translations of the Bible into English we find something quite surprising. The word, “church” appears 111 times in the King James Bible (in the New Testament only), 148 times in the New Living Translation (in the New Testament only), 112 times in the



Ecclesia and Synagoga, meaning "Church and Synagogue", are a pair of figures personifying the Church and Judaism, found in medieval Christian art. This famous pair is in the portal of Strasbourg Cathedral.

New International Version (again, in the New Testament only). There are many other examples of Bible versions that make this distinction: the “Church” in the New Testament, and the “congregation” of Israel in the Old Testament, but this distinction is artificial.

There are other English translations, such as Tyndale’s, that never use the word “church” at all in the New Testament. There are also translations, such as the Geneva Bible and the Douay-Rheims that use the word “church” in *both* the Old and New Testaments.

In Tyndale’s translation the word, “assembly” or, “congregation” is used in places where we are used to seeing the word, “church” (and these are the same words he uses in the Old Testament – he is consistent in his translation). The Greek word that is most commonly translated as “church” in English versions of the New Testament is: *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία). This is the origin of the English word, “ecclesiastical”, and the Spanish word, “iglesia”.

However, this word, *ekklesia* is an Old Testament word too, and we know this because of an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Septuigint (abbreviated LXX), which was written in the 3rd century B.C. by a group of 72 Jewish scholars. *Ekklesia* is the word most often used by the LXX when speaking of the assembly, or congregation, of Israel (it being the Greek translation of the Hebrew word, *qahal* (קהל)).

There is much more that could be said here, but the idea I am trying to communicate is that the words used to describe the covenant body of believers in both Testaments is actually the same, and our modern linguistic and cultural conventions have helped to produce a division where there was originally none. In addition, the New Testament, and especially the Book of Mormon, repeatedly emphasize the fact that the body of covenant believers is still Israel, and that gentile believers must be grafted into that tree, the House of Israel, and not the other way around.⁴⁷

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. — Galatians 3:7

These explanations were to show that the historically, linguistically, symbolically, and covenantally, the church has not replaced or displaced Israel. In fact, the church is a branch of Israel, and the church had better be Israel, and not some separate Gentile body, or else God cannot be married to us. And furthermore, if the church is Israelite, then God had better be an Israelite too (indeed he is the God of Israel), or else we cannot marry him.

Let us talk about the husband or bridegroom now. There are many ways that our relationship to God is described in the scriptures. God has many titles.

The Old Testament affirms that Yehovah is our Rock, our Redeemer, and our Holy One – the Holy One of Israel:

Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, The Holy One of Israel.

— Isaiah 47:4

⁴³ 2 Nephi 29:4-5,14

⁴⁴ Jacob 5, Romans 11

⁴⁵ 3 Nephi 16:10-20

⁴⁶ The divergence between Christians and Jews started in the 1st century with Christians distancing themselves from Jews to avoid persecution from Rome.

⁴⁷ 3 Nephi 16:10-20

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go. — Isaiah 48:17

And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer. — Psalm 78:35

Yehovah is the First and the Last, our King, and our Law Giver:

This is what the LORD says — Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. — Isaiah 44:6

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

— Isaiah 33:22

Yehovah is our also our savior (Isaiah 43:11), our creator, our shepherd (Psalm 23), and will come with the sound of a trumpet to administer judgement:

The LORD will appear above his people; his arrows will fly like lightning! The Sovereign LORD will sound the ram's horn and attack like a whirlwind from the southern desert. — Zechariah 9:14

You will readily see that these titles, belonging to Yehovah, are also applied to Yeshua.⁴⁸ Many of these titles need not be exclusive, whether literal or symbolic. For there can be multiple shepherds, multiple judges, even multiple kings, and creators.

But of all these titles and relationships there is one that is exclusive. Israel can only have one husband! We know this because God would not do something contrary to his laws, even if it were only symbolic act or relationship. He is wholly holy.

And yet, it might seem that the congregation of Israel has two husbands. The Old Testament clearly says that Yehovah (who is the Father) is the husband of the ekklesia:

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. — Isaiah 54:5

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD God, and thou becamest mine. — Ezekiel 16:8

And the New Testament clearly says that Yeshua (who is the Son) is the bridegroom of the ekklesia.

⁴⁸ **Yeshua is the LORD God, The Holy One of Israel:** And he also has shown unto me that the LORD God, the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself unto them in the flesh; and after he should manifest himself they should scourge him and crucify him, according to the words of the angel who spake it unto me. And after they have hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks against the Holy One of Israel, behold, the judgments of the Holy One of Israel shall come upon them. And the day cometh that they shall be smitten and afflicted...And they that believe not in him shall be destroyed, both by fire, and by tempest, and by earthquakes, and by bloodsheds, and by pestilence, and by famine. And they shall know that the LORD is God, the Holy One of Israel. (2 Nephi 6:9-10,15)

Yeshua is the Law Giver: Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel; (3 Nephi 15:5)

Yeshua is the Creator: Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh. (Ether 3:14-16)

Thus saith the LORD your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made; The same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes; I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me. (D&C 38:1-3)

Many other examples can be given where Yeshua is the First and the last, the Father, the Judge, Redeemer, Savior, Sheppard, etc.

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.
– 2 Corinthians 11:2

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church...For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands...

– Ephesians 5:23-24, 31-32

However, this presents some problems. Since one godly man is the head of a godly woman,

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
– 1 Corinthians 11:3

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the LORD.
– Colossians 3:18

Then, two husbands will not work from the woman's point of view, for no one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

Nor will it work from the husband's point of view, for Yehovah is a jealous husband:

for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.⁴⁹
– Exodus 34:14

For they provoked him to anger with their high places; they moved him to jealousy with their idols.
– Psalm 78:58

Nor, and this is the most important point, will this arrangement work from the point of view of the Law, this arrangement would be adulterous.

A son cannot have his father's wife:

The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. – Leviticus 18:8

And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.
– Leviticus 20:11

Nor can a father have his son's wife:

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
– Leviticus 18:15

And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them.
– Leviticus 20:12

If there ever was a father and son that have the same wife, then they are the same man.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son.
– Ether 3:14

Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh.
– 3 Nephi 1:14

And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.
– Mosiah 15:1-4

All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth that the Son is the Father, and the Father is the Son, but him to whom the Son will reveal it.
– Luke 10:22/23 (JSNT)

Thus, Israel and the church are one and the same bride; and, Yehovah and Yeshua are one and the same husband. Yehovah married Israel on Shavuot. He met her at Mount Sinai and presented her with a covenant. He would be her

⁴⁹ See also Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15

God and she would be his people. The Jewish people have preserved some interesting legends about the proceedings of that day. Altho it was a fearful experience for us, we nevertheless agreed to be a people peculiar to the LORD. In fact, we were so enamored by our courtship with him in Egypt that we said “yes” to his marriage proposal even before we had heard the terms of the Ketubah.⁵⁰

This raises an obvious question, and is the beginning of our Mystery: If Yehovah is the husband of the ekklesia already, then why are we waiting for the wedding feast? Why are we waiting for the Bridegroom to come? Isn't the wedding already done?

The answer is, “yes, sort of”. The wedding was done. We were his,⁵¹ and he was our husband, but there *was* a problem, and there *is* a problem. We were unfaithful, and we are currently divorced.⁵²

Thus, we now have need to mention the laws for divorce, which are found in Deuteronomy 24:

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.
— Deuteronomy 24:1-4

To summarize, if a woman is given a bill of divorcement from her husband, she may not remarry him unless she has stayed celibate in between. If, on the other hand, she has been taken by another husband, or lover, then she may not be remarried to her first husband in the case that she later becomes divorced or widowed from her second husband, or leaves her other lovers.

So, how did we end up divorced? Israel started out as one people, but there were factions among us. There always were factions, and always will be, and this was not necessarily a problem for our husband. Eventually however, the kingdom split. The kingdom in the North was Israel (with Ephraim at its head) and the Kingdom to the South was our sister, Judah. As sisters we did not always get along, but Yehovah was married to both of us. Being antagonistic towards our sister was bad enough, but we mistreated our husband as well; we both mistreated him. Many of the prophets mention this situation. The prophet Jeremiah says:

They say,⁵³ If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers;
— Jeremiah 3:1

Jeremiah is quoting Deuteronomy 24 on divorce when discussing the relationship between Israel and Yehovah. God keeps his own law. Jeremiah goes on to say:

6 ...Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.
7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.
8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.
9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.
10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.

⁵⁰ Exodus 19:3-8

⁵¹ Ezekiel 16:8

⁵² While it is true that we are currently unmarried (as we are still awaiting the Bridegroom and the Wedding Feast), we are also currently engaged, betrothed, or espoused (see 2 Corinthians 11:2) and this is almost equivalent to marriage in many ways. For example; once betrothed a woman is able to commit adultery (the same as tho she were married). See Deuteronomy 22:22-29

⁵³ Deuteronomy 24:1-4

20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

The prophet Isaiah said:

Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.
– Isaiah 50:1

The LORD instructed the prophet Hosea:

Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts. Otherwise I will strip her naked⁵⁴ and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst. I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery.
– Hosea 2:2-4

Hosea goes on describing our adultery and the resulting punishments. Then in verse 11 the LORD mentions one very significant evidence that lets us know about our divorced condition. He says:

I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.
– Hosea 2:11

And Ezekiel has the most graphic depictions of the betrayal and adulteries of the two sisters (and a third sister, Sodom, is also mentioned in the metaphor) which can be read in the 16th and 23rd chapters of his book.

Despite these scathing words, all is not lost. There is hope! He wants to take us back, if and when we will return to him.

To Hosea he said:

Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods...For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or altars of stone, without ephod or [urim and thummim]⁵⁵. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.
– Hosea 3:1

To Isaiah he said:

For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,” says your God. “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer.
– Isaiah 54:5-8

Yet return unto me, Yehovah said to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 3:1)

Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith

⁵⁴ Remember, her clothing is the righteousness God gave her by his Law.

⁵⁵ The King James Version translated this word as “teraphim”, which are small, home-based idols. This does not seem to match the sense of these verses at all. Ephod & urim and thummim go together the way that King & Prince and altar & sacrifice go together. Additionally, the purpose of the list is to describe good things that Israel will be missing in their divorced state, and home-based idols hardly seems an appropriate inclusion. The Septuigint (LXX) however, preserves variants indicating that urim and thummim is what was intended. The Brenton version of the LXX, uses the word, “manifestations” rather than “teraphim”. The NETS version, uses the words, “clear ones” with a note that it could also be translated as “explaining devices”.

the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:
– Jeremiah 3:12-14

To Ezekiel he said:

I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you...So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.
– Ezekiel 16:59-60, 62-63



He wants us to come back, but there is a problem: we did not remain celibate, but went to our other lovers; Baal, Ishtar, and Molech, Ra, Asherah, and Marduck; Egyptian gods, Canaanite gods, Assyrian and Babylonian gods; Mammon, and Fauci, and Trump, and Brandon, and various other celebrities, politicians, and church leaders. And so we have a problem – we turned away and went to other lovers. And God has a problem too; he wants to take us back, but cannot because: according to his Just, Holy, and Perfect Decrees, we have invalidated ourselves to return. He keeps his own Law.

Here then is a contradiction. On one hand God's Law, which cannot be annulled, says we may not return. On the other hand we have God's Word, which does not fail, promising that he will take us back.

In the words of Jeremiah:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake [this was the first marriage – he took them out at Passover and married them at Shavuot], although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.⁵⁶
– Jeremiah 31:31-33

How can this be? The problems are actually manifold. There is the problem of divorce and remarriage, with our adultery compounding the problem. Additionally, our husband is a priest, a high priest in fact. Altho he is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek,⁵⁷ the Aaronic is an appendage⁵⁸ to the Melchizedek and serves as a type to point us to Messiah as well. Recall that the priests were not allowed to marry any tainted women. They could not even marry a woman who had previously been married, unless she was the widow of a priest.

What is the solution to all these problems? It is for our husband and LORD to die. To die and return to life resurrected, a new creature, a new man. To die both for the sake of our sins - that we may be made clean, and also to release us from the laws preventing our remarriage. In fact, Yeshua's death takes care of a problem (and a particular sin) that the Law had no other solution for: How can a wife, divorced for her "uncleanness" and then continuing with her unfaithful lovers, be allowed to return to her faithful husband?

It is interesting to note that Isaiah, when speaking about the Holy One reclaiming his bride, the ekklesia, he refers to her as a "widow", rather than "divorced" in Isaiah 54:

⁵⁶ See also Hebrews 8:8-11

⁵⁷ Heb 3:1, Heb 8:1-3, etc.

⁵⁸ D&C 107:14

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.
– Isaiah 54:4

A priest can marry a widow, if she was the widow of a priest.

It is also beautiful to note that our sins will be forgotten in connection with our remarriage:

I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.⁵⁹ – Jeremiah 31:34

Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.

– Ezekiel 20:63

A profane woman is no longer guilty if she has repented and her sins have been atoned. Repentance and forgiveness can even restore virtue.⁶⁰

I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

– 2 Corinthians 11:2

And finally, here is the mystery of the death, resurrection, and future marriage of Messiah. Paul explains in his letter to the Romans:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?
– Romans 7:1

Our God is amazing! By the Law, we have disqualified ourselves from returning to our husband, but if our husband dies, then this particular law is no longer relevant. This is called a loophole.

Continuing in Romans:

for I speak to them that know the law...For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband [the law governing her freedom to remarry].⁶¹ So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law [of your husband] by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

The first covenant was: Come out of Egypt, the Passover will be offered and the barley will be waved, and I will be your God. The new covenant (which in reality is both new and everlasting, or in other words, the renewed covenant) is: I will come down, and I will die, and I will be raised, and I will take you back as my wife. It will be the same covenant as before, but this time those who accept it will have the covenant written upon their hearts,⁶² and will no longer stray.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as [if] unto the LORD [or out of service unto the LORD].

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.



⁵⁹ See also Hebrews 8:12

⁶⁰ Luke 8:46 Jesus can give us virtue, can restore virtue, and strength where there was once weakness and vice.

⁶¹ See also 1 Corinthians 7:39

⁶² See 2 Corinthians 3:3; Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.
29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the LORD the church:
30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.
– Ephesians 5:22-31

Amen. □