



## *Week 1*



## *He Chose You*

*You may have trouble receiving love when it is offered. Something inside your heart holds you back. You may have gotten accustomed to shielding parts of your heart from Jesus because they are too painful, you are too fearful, or too prideful. You may find this week that He will confront places in your heart that, in the past, refused to accept His love. Let His love in. Let Christ heal and restore those broken, fragile places in your heart with the magnificent outpouring of His lavish love.*





*Ancient Jewish Wedding  
Tradition*

*In ancient Jewish weddings,  
the father often chose the  
bride for his son.*

*The bridegroom paid the  
bride price set by the father  
of the bride.*

*Our Relationship with Christ  
as His Bride*

*Our Heavenly Father chose  
us to be the Bride of His Son.  
Ephesians 1:4*

*Christ paid the price for His  
Bride with His own blood.  
I Corinthians 6:19-20*

————— MEMORY VERSE FOR THIS WEEK —————

You did not choose Me, but I chose you,  
and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...

John 15:16





# Chosen



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## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

*Be very, very still in God's presence.*

"In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch." Psalm 5:3

*Lord, I am curious about Your great love for me. Plant Your Word deep into my heart, rooting out all lies and replacing them with the truth. Flood the eyes of my heart with Your holy light. I want to receive all the love You have for me. I want my life to change. Please, begin the work now, Lord. Begin in me. In Jesus' name. Amen.*



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As many Jewish men of His time obtained their brides, Christ's Bride was chosen for Him by His Father. We were chosen by God the Father to be in Christ before the foundation of the world. And Jesus accepted that choice.

He has chosen you, His beloved Bride, to live with Him in a love relationship. But unlike earthly marriages, this union will never end. The two shall become one for all eternity. He is constantly pursuing you and me to bring us into the awareness of His love.

And His love is enough.

So, join me now as we enter the story of Levi and Ruth, a Jewish couple living at the time of Jesus. While their story is fictional, the facts are not. These were the laws and customs of Jewish weddings in that day.

## *The Story of Levi and Ruth*

She came to their family an orphan. Both of her parents were killed in a terrible earthquake that had left many dead in the region. Miraculously, Ruth and two of her siblings survived the quake that destroyed their home. Since none of her blood relatives were left alive, her father's dearest friend, Benjamin, and his wife, Joanna, took them

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## MEMORY VERSE

*"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit..."*

*– John 15:16*

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into their home.

Ruth was acutely aware of the fact that her father had died while still in debt. He had worked hard, but never seemed able to pay off the many accounts. Ruth carried that burden with her to Benjamin's and Joanna's home.

Benjamin and Joanna already had six children. Levi, Benjamin's firstborn and the only son of his first wife, Rachel, was a tall, strong, handsome young man. His eyes were his most distinctive feature. They were like steel blue flames of fire. They were kind eyes, wise, determined, and laughing all at the same time. Levi had taken his place as a man both at work and at the synagogue, sitting among the finest Torah scholars of the region. Every mother in the village wanted her daughter to marry him.

Nathan, Joshua, Mary, Jonah, and Hannah were the other "arrows" filling Benjamin's quiver. It was a happy, bustling, kosher home where everyone worked hard, played hard, and loved much. The day Ruth and her little brother and sister arrived, the family was celebrating a religious feast. There is always something to celebrate in a Jewish home. While Ruth was still in shock and grief, the familiarity of the feast and the customs comforted her.

It took time, but day after day and month after month, the wounds in her heart began to heal. When sufficient time had passed and Benjamin felt the children were ready, he announced that he was officially adopting them as his own. This meant they could never be disinherited. They would share in the blessings of Israel.

With her newfound confidence in being a daughter under the protection of a loving father again, Ruth began to emerge from her shell.

She began helping Joanna in the kitchen and Benjamin with the garden. She worked from morning until night trying to please them. She couldn't do enough to try to win their approval.

Then, she began following the reapers in the fields, gathering the wheat left behind. If only she could be helpful enough and work hard enough, perhaps she could pay off her father's debts, for which she felt responsible. Surely with enough hard work, she could earn her own way.

But, as hard as she worked, the burden of unpaid debt weighed on



her sagging shoulders. And, she never felt completely accepted by the family.

One day she overheard Benjamin speaking with another man from their village. They were discussing business and the weather, when all of a sudden the topic changed to something that brought her heart to a stop. Benjamin began to tell the man that he had decided on his choice of a bride for his oldest son.

This was big news. Who could Benjamin have chosen for his firstborn son? The village had been waiting for this announcement for some time. Levi was the most sought after bachelor of all. He was a voracious student of *Torah*. He was kind and considerate, tall and handsome. Some very fortunate girl was going to be blessed.

As she moved into the shadows to hide and yet still hear, she thought she heard Benjamin announce the name of the chosen one. But certain she had misunderstood, she leaned closer to hear more. Benjamin said the name of the maiden again, and she stopped breathing.

“Ruth,” her adoptive father said. “Ruth is the one I have chosen for Levi. It makes perfect sense. She is not a close relative, and so can marry my son. She is the daughter of my dearest friend and has been grafted into our family by adoption. I want to see this lovely young woman become a bride in this tribe. Ruth will be the perfect complement to my son.

“She needs to be loved and accepted. Joanna and I have tried to tell her how much we love her. We have provided for her needs and have sheltered her from harm. Joanna has trained and taught her how to live as a good Jewish woman. Sadly, she takes these gifts and tries too hard to please us. She is frightened of me and won’t draw near so I can tell her that she pleases me, simply because she is my child.

“I have sought to teach her—I know, I know, my friend. Most Jewish men do not teach their daughters. But as my beloved daughter, I have taught her the commandments, so she can enjoy the blessings that come with obedience.

“She needs to know her value and worth. It breaks my heart to watch her labor so hard to work off that debt. She’ll never pay off the tremendous liability left by her father. The interest is accruing every day. It is a debt much larger than she even knows. I have not revealed



all that she owes. It would overwhelm her. I only let her know a little at time, as I think she has maturity to comprehend. And, I have only told her that much, so she will appreciate my love and care for her.

“I have tried to show her how much I love her as a father. I think she accepts those truths in her head, but it has been inadequate to reach her heart. Ruth still seems determined to exhaust herself working to achieve value and to be worthy of my love.

“I have finally come to the conclusion that she needs to be in a home and family of her own. She needs a husband, not just a father, to express true love to her. A husband can express love to a woman’s heart a thousand times better than even a good father who loves her completely.

“To truly communicate to this precious girl how much she is loved, I have made a decision. I will betroth her to my Levi, my firstborn son and the light of my life. Then, I will teach Levi how to spend the rest of his life loving her sacrificially, so that she knows and understands true love. I believe this will reach her heart.”



## *The Heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride*

Read II Corinthians 11:2

2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

Who is the bride and who is the groom in this verse?

Read Matthew 9:15

15 And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

To whom does Jesus refer as the Bridegroom?

If you know the Lord Jesus in a personal, born-again relationship, you are His Bride and He is your Bridegroom. You have been betrothed



### *Heart Tip:*

Don't let this first verse throw you. If you aren't a "pure virgin," don't despair. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You are on a journey to become pure. That's what this study is all about!



or engaged to Him. Right now, you are being transformed from what you were, into a beautiful, glorious bride!

I know something about weddings. Our three daughters were born in four years, but we had their three weddings in three years! So for three solid years, we worked, planned, shopped, and created weddings for the brides in our family.

Lately, I've been thinking about the comparison between weddings here on earth and the preparations right now in heaven for the wedding that will take place when the Son of God claims His Bride. I believe this picture will help you and me begin to understand just how much we are loved with the passionate, unreasonable, off-the-chart love of our Heavenly Bridegroom.

### *Initiator of the Covenant*

If you were able to choose a wife for your son, whom would you select? What would she be like? Can you imagine it? Jewish families in Biblical times often chose mates for their sons. And they chose carefully.

Read Genesis 24:1-4

1 Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way.

2 Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh,

3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live,

4 but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Who began the wedding proceedings in this Hebrew family?

How particular was the father about the marriage of his son?

Now, in this case, the father did the initiating. In a Jewish family, it was the man who would choose his bride, or his father who would make the choice for him.



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*Heart Tip:*

In America today, I am sorry to say, some girls call on boys. Here's a little tip for free. If you are single, don't do that! It puts the shoe on the wrong foot. Let the guy initiate!

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Sometimes the bride was chosen in much the same fashion as when Abraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to find the bride for Isaac. God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, and here was his son of that promise, a single adult for 40 years! It was about time for Isaac to marry and start a family.

Abraham must have said something like, “Okay Eliezer, find a bride for Isaac. It is very important for her to be from the right family with the right lineage. But I’m ready for some grandchildren so go get that bride and bring her back to my son.”

Did you know that God the Father chose the bride for His Son?

Read Ephesians 1:3, 4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...

Who initiated our relationship with Jesus Christ?

When did God choose you for His Son?



*Heart Tip:*

Who are you? If you have asked the Lord to live in your heart, then you are His chosen Bride! God is saying to you, “Sweetheart, I chose you. I picked you on purpose for my only Son.”



God chose YOU to be the Bride for His Son even before He created the world! Can you let that amazing truth sink in? God the Father chose you to become one with His Son, knowing your potential to radiate and reflect His Son’s love.

God knows you. He sees you. He knows exactly what you have done, and He still loves you. He has chosen you to be the Bride of His perfect, glorious, beautiful, awesome, only begotten Son. You have been chosen to be the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Copy this week’s memory verse, John 15:16 here.

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# He Loves You

## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

“Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;  
Neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;  
But you will forget the shame of your youth,  
And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.  
For your husband is your Maker,  
Whose name is the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 54:4-5

*Lord Jesus, would you teach my heart to receive Your love? Would you show me how to exchange my shame and humiliation and disgrace with the truth of your covenant love for me, just as I am? I love You, Lord. I trust You to undertake this great work in my heart. I pray this in Your precious name. Amen.*

## Levi's Bride

Levi worked hard with his father, his uncles, and his brothers in the family business. He was learning the family trade of wine-making. Theirs were the finest vineyards and of the highest quality. He loved to tend and prune the vines alongside his father. His delight was watching the fruit come to maturity on the vine.

The family did well financially, but each man was expected to pull his own weight, to do his share. Levi intended to be a successful businessman in his own right. Well known as a serious student of the *Torah*, he wanted someday to assume the position of elder among his people. Over the past several months, the thoughts of having a fine house, a beautiful wife, and a home full of children had not left his mind for long.

Now that he was twenty-five, Levi's father was beginning to hint at the possibilities of choosing a wife for him. The men had teased him at work, causing him to blush. Who would be his bride?

He knew there were many girls in the village who would be happy to comply. With such beautiful, charming young women, their village

## MEMORY VERSE

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...”*  
– John 15:16

### Torah:

The five books of Moses; The first five books of the Bible; the body of wisdom and law contained in Jewish scripture. <sup>1</sup>



had become famous for producing the finest brides in all Israel. He knew that any of them would make someone a fine wife.

But, he had already made up his mind. He would await his father's decision. He would let his father choose his bride. Levi had that kind of confidence in his father. Benjamin was a wise man with the ability to see down the road of the future. Whomever his father chose would be just right for him.

So, when Benjamin called him from the fields to come in early one day, Levi knew this might be the day he would hear his father's decision. Wiping the dirt from his strong hands, he gathered up his garments and with long strides covered the ground between him and his father.

They sat down under the large olive tree that grew beside the vineyard. It provided a shady rest for tired backs. Leaning against the cool trunk, Levi waited for his father to speak.

"Levi, first, I want to commend you for allowing me to choose your bride. Because of your trust in me, I have taken my time. I have weighed all the issues and have come to a decision.

"I think my choice will surprise you. But after a while, I believe you will come to see that the bride I have chosen is the perfect complement for you.

"Levi," and then Benjamin waited until Levi was looking him directly in the eyes. "Levi, I have chosen Ruth to be your bride." Levi's eyes widened. Ruth?

"Yes, Levi, I know. Yes, Ruth, the frightened little one who moves in shadows through the house. Ruth, who never seems to get a full sentence out without stumbling through it. Ruth, the girl who works so hard to be loved and accepted by people who already do. Ruth, the one who will love you with all her heart. The one who needs your love so very much."



## *Choosing the Foolish and Weak*

Read I Corinthians 1:26-30

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no man may boast before God.

30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,



Whom has God chosen instead of the wise and strong?

Why? (See verses 29 and 30)

Who wants you to be in relationship with Christ?

God isn't impressed with the worldly view of paying tribute to those who exert powerful influence, can boast of great accomplishments, and own large bank accounts. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and He has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.

### *Choose Me?*

Do you ever compare yourself to another woman and wonder why God blessed her and chose her to have a better life or better lot than you? Does it seem like everyone else has a more spiritual husband (or a husband at all!), better-behaved children, a bigger house, nicer clothes, more friends, or thinner thighs than you? Do you ever feel that God just didn't choose you?

Our earthly perspective tells us that if we aren't on top of the game, if we don't have the most, the best and the easiest, then we are losers. But in the kingdom of God, it's just the opposite. He has chosen those who can boast only in Him, in order that His glory alone might be revealed.



### Read I Peter 1:1-2

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Circle the word “chosen” in verse 1.

Did you choose God first or did He choose you?

What characteristic of God enabled Him to choose you before you were born?

What is the Spirit’s job?

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*Heart Tip:*

Do you see the meaning and purpose of your life? You are not an accident of the Big Bang out in space millions of years ago. You were specially designed and created to be in an intimate relationship with God, with the Holy Spirit, and with Jesus Christ.



Since you were chosen before you were born, what did you do to deserve God’s election?

God chose you before you were born. He knew you, and He chose you. The Holy Spirit makes us holy and acceptable to God by sanctifying us—setting us apart for God’s holy use. We were chosen to obey Christ. Even as the altar of the temple was sprinkled by the blood of sacrificial animals (Exodus 29-30), we are sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, which is cleansing us and making us fit vessels to be used for the worship of God.

You will be fulfilled when you discover your purpose for being created. As the Bride of Christ, you were created to trust Him, to obey Him, and to live in harmony with Him forever in a glorious covenant relationship. Earthly marriages are shadowy pictures of this most satisfying, fulfilling, and meaningful sacred romance.

Read I Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;



What four phrases did Peter use to describe the Church, the Bride of Christ?

Why has God chosen you according to this verse?

Read Colossians 3:12, 13

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Since you are chosen, what kind of heart are you to put on?

What actions should you take according to verse 13?

Now, does the requirement of God to put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience make more sense? It is because you are secure in God's love, in your position of blessing, and in your selection by God that you can now extend graciousness to others, as His life flows through you.

You don't have to work to make yourself into "somebody" before you can, in love, take care of other's needs. You ARE "somebody" already! You have been chosen for the most high and lofty position available in Christ's kingdom that rules and reigns over all other kingdoms. You are now of royal blood chosen to marry the King's son! In Colossians 3:12-13, Paul is encouraging us to act like who we are really are...the chosen, royal Bride of Christ.

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*Heart Tip:*  
You are a royal princess chosen to marry a prince!  
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# Ten-Goat Girl



## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, And all that is within me,  
Bless His holy name." Psalm 103:1

*Today, try praying on your knees with something over your head to shut out all distractions.*

*Lord Jesus, You are awesome and powerful and majestic. I praise You because You are holy and there is no other God besides You. You rule and reign in power and authority over all. My life is in Your hands. Now please take my heart and transform it by the renewing and restoring of my mind. It is in Your name that I pray. Amen.*



## The Bride Price

Levi took a deep breath and closed his eyes. To take Ruth as his bride would definitely be a challenge.

She would be not hard for him to love. In fact, he had loved her from the moment she had set foot in the house. She was so small and fragile. He had wanted to take her in his strong arms, but held back out of respect. Although she was his adopted sister, he could never view her as a "sister."

Ruth was kind and considerate. She was a very hard worker. She was helpful and generous. He'd observed all that. She was a bit plain to the casual observer, but he knew there was deep beauty below the surface of her wrinkled brow and sagging shoulders. When she lifted her head, he could see that her eyes were large and dark and beautiful.

How would he persuade Ruth to love him? She didn't seem open to personal relationships. How could he interest her in the kind of open and honest, but deep level of intimate sharing he had always imagined for his marriage?

Well, he would begin at the beginning. The first move for a Jewish groom was to negotiate the bride price with her father. That should

## MEMORY VERSE

*"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit..."*  
— John 15:16



prove interesting, since her “father” and his father were one and the same great man, Benjamin.

He knew the bride price for Ruth would be high. Just as any father of a bride, Benjamin would see to that. And particularly in Ruth’s case. In the absence of her natural father, Benjamin would be sure to be especially protective of Ruth.

Levi knew Benjamin well enough to know that he would not lower the price because of their relationship. In fact, it would probably require the forfeiture of something very dear to him. Every Jewish father of the bride set a high bride price for several reasons.

First, it honored the daughter by making her price one that would require sacrifice. The high price indicated her worth as a wife. It told the bride that she was very valuable. It would say in effect to the groom, “Listen, this is our ten-goat girl. She’s going to cost you a fortune!”

Second, the father needed to be compensated for rearing a girl who was not able to work as strenuously in the fields as her brothers. He wanted to be repaid for the loss in farm labor!

Finally, the bride price was intentionally high so the groom could not miss realizing the gravity of the commitment he was making. It was something he could not take lightly. The bride price was going to cost him something, and once the groom had made the sacrifice and commitment to pay it, he would be totally and completely committed to the relationship. The father of the bride knew that.

But when Levi worked up the courage to go to Ruth’s father, and his, to officially and formally begin negotiations for his bride, he was unprepared for the price Benjamin had set. It was the highest price that had ever been set for a bride in all the history of Israel. The price was tremendous. It would take all he had.



### *A Bride For Isaac*

Remember Eliezer and his trip to find a bride for Issac?

Skim the story in Genesis 24:10-27, 32-33, 49-53

What material goods did the servant take on his trip to secure the bride?  
(verses 10, 22, 53)

Why?

Eliezer took many expensive gifts on his journey because he needed the gifts to pay the bride price. He was prepared to pay a large sum for a choice bride.

Read Proverbs 31:10

10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.

Copy it here:

The word “price” (Kings James Version) or “worth” (NIV, NAS) of the wife described in this verse comes from the Hebrew word “*meker*” (meh’-ker) or “*makar*” (maw-kar’) which means “pay, price, to sell as merchandise, as a daughter in marriage, to surrender, to sell away.”<sup>2</sup> The concept of selling a daughter in marriage is foreign to most of our 21st century minds. But, since Christ purchased us with His blood, I want you to stay with this line of thought.

The bride described in Proverbs had a price that was far above rubies. She was an honored and loved daughter because of all the virtues listed in Proverbs 31:11-31. She would be a valuable asset to her husband, so her father would require a very high price of the groom in order to attain her.

Jesus, your Heavenly Bridegroom, asked His Father to choose a Bride for Him. A Bride who would be an asset to Him and possess all the character traits and qualities that would bring Him honor. A Bride who would be the completion of His love.

And God did. He chose you.

Knowing that you had the potential to open your heart to receive the life of Christ to be your life, He chose you. In order that the blood of Christ might cleanse you from all unrighteousness, He chose you. Knowing that you could allow the words of Christ to be your words, He chose you. So that the heart of Christ could love the world through you, He chose you.

Then, He set the highest imaginable price for the Groom to pay. All your debts had to be paid. Every sin had to be blotted out with a blood sacrifice.



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*Heart Tip:*

Knowing that you had the potential to open your heart to receive the life of Christ to be your life, He chose you. In order that the blood of Christ might cleanse you from all unrighteousness, He chose you. Knowing that you could allow the words of Christ to be your words, He chose you. So that the heart of Christ could love the world through you, He chose you.

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Read Acts 20:28.

28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Fill in the blanks:

"To shepherd the \_\_\_\_\_ of God which He \_\_\_\_\_ with His own \_\_\_\_\_."

Read Colossians 1:14 (KJV)

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Why are your sins forgiven?

How do you know the value Jesus placed on your life?

There was only one way for your Bride price to be paid, and Jesus knew very well what it would cost to obtain the Bride his Father had chosen. It would cost Him His life.

### *Journaling the Restoration of the Heart*

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# He Purchased Me



## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

“For you have been bought with a price...”  
I Corinthians 6:20

*Oh Lord, Jesus. You chose me, and You loved me when I did not love You. You left the Father and laid down Your life before I ever accepted Your invitation to be in relationship with You. This is a love beyond my comprehension. O love of God! I worship You. I love You. I want with all my heart to glorify You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*



## Torah

Benjamin had shocked Levi with the announcement of Ruth’s bride price. “Ruth’s bride price is the payment in full of all her debts. She is not to be married until all accounts are settled.” Levi was aware of the enormity of the debt. It was unsettling.

Levi knew the law for obtaining a bride. For the marriage to be recognized legally, he would need to present to Ruth something of value and a marriage covenant document. An important part of the document was the bride price, in it he would be committing himself to pay it in full.

While his was a hard-working family, they did not have silver or gold on hand. They traded for most of their goods. So to obtain the currency needed to pay Ruth’s entire debt, he would need to surrender something valuable.

In his village, it was commonly known that the family’s *Torah*, the scroll containing the Books of the Law, could be sold to obtain the money necessary to pay the price for a desired bride.

Intensity grew within Levi as he contemplated the cost. Sell the *Torah*? The study of *Torah* had become his way of life. How would he live without it? *Torah* was his lifeblood.

But, he began to rehearse the principles from the scriptures he had

## MEMORY VERSE

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit...”*

– John 15:16



learned while studying with Benjamin.

A bride is very valuable. The Proverbs said, “Who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies.” “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.” And, “House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

He spent a sleepless night wrestling with the enormity of the decision before him.

The next day, he found Benjamin to discuss the bride price once again. “Father, the only way to obtain Ruth’s full price is to sell the *Torah* we have had in this family for generations. What of our *Torah* readings each week? And, what of my studies? This is the way we spend our time together, Father. How can we let go of that closeness? I fear the price is too high.”

“Son, you must make your decision. Will you take this woman to be your wife? Will you lay down what is precious to you, that she might be free of her debt? Will you drink the cup with her? I want you to take Ruth, because I know this is the only way for her to ever be free. No groom would undertake her debt, but you. I could ask no other to do it. But no one can make this decision for you. It is yours alone.”

It was already dark when Levi went off to be by himself. He knelt down beside his favorite olive tree, the one that grew beside the vineyard, and let loose the emotions welling up inside him. When he was spent, he quietly gathered himself. The decision had been made.

Levi carefully took the *Torah* from its beautiful case. It would be sold. The full amount of Ruth’s debt would be pardoned. He would obtain his bride.



## *The Word*

Do you know who is the Word of God?

Read John 1:1-4

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.



What is Jesus called in verse 1 of this passage?

What is the *Torah* for the Jews?

God's word says in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus is the Word of God.

A word is a spoken thought. Jesus is described by John as the Word of God walking about on the earth, housing the very thoughts of God and bringing them to life on the earth.

Read Matthew 26:14-15, 27:1-5

14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests  
15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.

1 Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death;  
2 and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.  
3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,  
4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!"  
5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

What question did Judas ask?

How did Christ pay the bride price for His Bride?

Judas asked, "What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?" They weighed out 30 pieces of silver into his hand.

I want you to think about this. Jesus, the Word, was sold for 30



pieces of silver. Jesus, our Heavenly Bridegroom, paid the full bride price for us with His lifeblood as he was sold to pay the bride price set by His father.

It is interesting to note that in the following case in the Old Testament, silver was paid for a bride price and presumably was used as a standard payment for brides.<sup>3</sup>

Read Deuteronomy 22:28, 29

28 If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered,

29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days.

What was the amount of the bride price in this specific case?

Remember, Jesus' Father is also your Father. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, God is your Father, and He set the bride price for you. Do you know what that bride price was? All of your sins had to be completely forgiven. And Jesus paid it all, the full price with His life.

How did He do that? Just follow Him to the garden.

Read Luke 22:39-42

39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives and the disciples also followed Him.

40 When He arrived at the place, He said pray that you may not enter into temptation.

41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and began to pray,

42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but Yours be done."

What is the indication that Jesus knew what it would cost Him personally to pay the bride price?

The price the Father set for us was extreme. It was higher than the price any bridegroom had ever paid for his bride. In the Garden of Gethsemane, our Heavenly Bridegroom weighed the cost set by the



Father of the Bride.

Jesus struggled with the enormity of the cost. Was His chosen Bride worth the price? It would mean leaving the comfort and presence of His Father. He would be choosing to give Himself to a Bride who did not know Him...did not yet love Him. Was she worth the sacrifice of His life?

Look at Luke 22:43-48. Feel the agony that Jesus went through as He made the decision to purchase you as His own Bride.

43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

47 While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him.

48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

What physical manifestation was evidence of the agony of Jesus?

According to verse 44, when did Jesus begin to shed His blood for His bride?

He agonized in that garden and may have been thinking, "Father, thank you for the Bride you have chosen for me, but she has a huge debt. Father, I love her, but there is only one sacrifice that will pay this bride price. God, to purchase this Bride, I will have to go to the cross."

Do not think for a minute this big, strong carpenter was crying in agony and sweating drops of blood only because he was going to be tortured physically. That unimaginable pain and humiliation would be horrible enough, but that is not the only reason He was sweating drops of blood in the garden.

Jesus was in agony because He knew it meant total separation from His father, even if only for a while. In fact, He would become your sin



and mine. And He would taste all the wrath of God against that sin.

Knowing all that, He knelt there and said in effect, “Yes! I love her that much. Yes, I will drink this betrothal cup with her. Yes, I will pay the full price...My life for My precious Bride.”

Read Matthew 26:26-28

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you;

28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

What did it cost Jesus, also called The Word, to secure his Bride?

Can you imagine Jesus that night in Gethsemane choosing to leave His Father—choosing to pay the price His Father had set for you and for me to become His Bride? He made that choice in the garden. He decided to lay down His life to pay the full, extravagant price for you, His Bride. Jesus was sold by a kiss. The bride price would be paid.

### *Journaling the Restoration of My Heart*

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# Sam's Story

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## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

"I stretch out my hands to You; My soul longs for You,  
as a parched land." Psalm 143:6

*Father, I long to know You. I want You to fill every part of my heart. Empty me of all wrong thinking and attitudes that are contrary to Your truth. Please, fill me with the truth of my great value in Your eyes. That truth that will set me free. In Jesus' name I pray this. Amen.*

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## The Sacrifice

While Levi was obtaining the sum to pay the bride price for her, Ruth was sitting at home unaware of the great sacrifice being made that very day on her behalf.

Ruth had fallen in love with Levi. The way he lightly brushed her hand as they helped in the kitchen and the way his eyes looked into hers made her believe he might love her, too. Some days she was sure of it.

But, it had been a long time since she had really spoken with Levi. Maybe their growing relationship had only been her imagination playing tricks on her. Perhaps he didn't love her at all.

As she sat by a large bowl of sweets in Joanna's kitchen, she began to munch absent-mindedly to satisfy the gnawing in her heart. It was probably just as before. She would love someone who would then abandon her. Her mama and her "abba," had left her. It would happen with Levi. She expected it. It was just a matter of time.

So, while her beloved went out on his torturous journey of love, she continued to stuff herself until she felt sick. Who cared what she did to her body?

If only Ruth had understood Benjamin's heart. If only she had known Levi's intentions!

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## MEMORY VERSE

*"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit..."*

— John 15:16

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## *Glorify God in Your Body*

Read I Corinthians 6:18-20

18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

What phrase from these verses reference *kinyan*, or the acquisition of a bride in a Jewish wedding?

What are we instructed to do in response to the great price that has been paid for us?

First Corinthians 6:20 says you have been bought with a price; therefore, glorify God with your body. The Amplified Version of the Bible reads, “You were bought with a price (purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own.)” So, what is my response to this unbelievable sacrifice Jesus made for me? Glorify God with my body.

I don’t know about you, but it makes me want to use my body to obey, love, and serve Him. One of the things I’m learning is that I need pure food and water in this body in order for it to operate and function exactly as it should. I am now drinking lots of pure water. That’s a good place to start!

I am saying, “Lord, I want to glorify you with my physical body. How can I help it function and operate at top speed, so that I can do everything You have called me to do? You have paid such a tremendous price for my life. Okay. I can start by drinking more water!”

I don’t know what God will impress on you as a way to glorify Him with your body, but I think He will give you an assignment, and you will be blessed if you do it. Each day ask Him, “What is my part in Your agenda today, Lord?”

*Kinyan:*

Formal physical acquisition of a bride that makes a wedding legally binding. Without the groom’s giving and the bride’s acceptance of some object of nominal value, there is no marriage.<sup>4</sup>

Read I Corinthians 7:23

23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Copy it here:

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What do you think it means to not be a slave of men?

This verse latched onto my heart as it sprang off the pages of my Bible in the context of my covenant with Christ. I have been bought, or acquired, as a Bride by my Heavenly Bridegroom at great expense. I now belong wholly to Him. Everything else in my life must become secondary.

Are you like me? Do you crave the approval of everyone around you? Your friends? Your husband? His parents? The women in your community? Your boss? Your children? Your parents? What have you been willing to compromise to get that approval? Are you ready now to rest in your elite status as a chosen, purchased Bride?

How little we know of the great sacrificial love that has been poured out for us! If you struggle to love yourself, you need look no further than the sacrificial love of Jesus to discover your worth. If you feel unloved by the very ones who should love you the most, open your heart to the streams of love flowing from the heart of your Heavenly Bridegroom.

If it is hard to love anyone, even Him, you need to recall that you have not only been created by Him and chosen by Him, but that He has paid the ultimate price for you to be His Bride.

The lie some of us have believed goes something like this, “You are worthless! You are inferior! You are never going to get it right! Look at what a failure you are. Look at what you have done. Look at what you have not done.” Do you hear that same accusing voice I hear? You can focus on your failure to stay on a diet, your failure to stay within your budget, or your seeming failure at being a daughter, wife, mom or friend.

Or, you can allow the Lord to restore your heart with this truth: Your faults and your failures are not who you are. They do not make up your identity. You are the Bride of Christ for whom all sins have been paid for in full. Now you are free to glorify God with all that you do. It

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*Heart Tip:*

Are you enslaved by the “addiction to approval” from those around you?

Remember who you are...You are the love and accepted Bride of Christ!

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is not a question of trying to please Him, for you are covered by His blood. You already please Him. Now, it's nice to serve Him!

Read Ephesians 1:7

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

What does the death of Jesus on the cross purchase for us according to Ephesians 1:7?

Read Ephesians 5:25

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

According to Ephesians 5:25, why did Christ, our Bridegroom, give Himself up for us?

We have redemption through His blood. He paid it all. He paid all of it!

You have not done anything that has not already been paid for in full. You have not gone too far for Him to buy you back. You are not so far away that His love cannot reach you. He paid it all. He paid it all for you, because He chose you and He loves you. Now, that needs to begin to change the way you think.

You are loved. It doesn't matter if you don't feel it, don't understand it, or don't deserve it. You are miraculously, radically, ridiculously loved by the ultimate lover of all time. He sacrificed it all, just for you.

Read Proverbs 31:10 (KJV)

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

What is the question in this verse?

What is her worth?



I think this a great question, don't you? Who can find a virtuous woman? I don't know. I haven't seen her. I look in the mirror and exclaim, "No, not here!" For the Lord to say of me, "I found her! I found my beautiful, lovely, virtuous bride!" absolutely astounds me.

"But Lord, you wouldn't say that about me if You knew what I just did."

I hear Him saying, "Denise, I am not looking at your behavior, and I am not looking at your performance. You are my chosen, purchased Bride, whose sins have been washed by my blood. Now, you have a worth that is far above the ruby red blood that was shed for you."

Do you know who wrote Proverbs 31:10-31? The Bible says that King Lemuel wrote those words. Not long ago, my pastor, Dr. Ed Young, told us that Lemuel was the nickname for King Solomon. Solomon's mother taught him the qualities of a virtuous woman.

Do you know who Solomon's mother was? She was Bathsheba, as in the Bathsheba who took a bath on the rooftop while King David watched with lust in his heart.

Can you imagine how Bathsheba felt telling Solomon the qualities of a virtuous woman? Bathsheba, whose name is still the reference for an adulteress? The question in verse 10, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" echoes in our hearts as it must have in hers. Yes, Lord, who can find a virtuous woman? I'm sure it's not I!

"Who can find a virtuous woman?" Bathsheba was able to ask. "For her price is far above rubies." I can imagine she said something like, "Oh Solomon, your father and I committed adultery. But Solomon, the red blood that flows on the altar cleanses us from all of our sins and makes us virtuous." She did not know about Calvary, but she knew of the blood of sacrificial animals on the altar of the temple.

God did not set your bride price based on your behavior. He did not set the price based on your performance. He did not look at your resume or biography or records to determine the price set for your Heavenly Bridegroom to pay. He set a price so high that what man can achieve on his own could never be enough to pay it. He set such a cost that it could only be paid in one way.

The price God set for you was a price far above red rubies. The price set for you was the red blood of Christ. God so values YOU—not



your abilities or achievements—that the price required for Christ to claim you as His own turned out to be the ultimate price of all.

### *The Price of Love*

Sam\* was a great guy and a very skilled oilman. One Saturday, while painting his house, he fell from a 15-foot ladder. Sam hit the back of his head full force on the concrete. Amazingly, he was still conscious, and got up from the ground. His wife, Nancy, drove him to the hospital, and there he joked with the staff about cracking his head.

But while there, Sam's eyes began to swell and Life Flight was called to transport the couple to our famous Houston Medical Center. Surgery was performed successfully, but his condition began to deteriorate. By Monday morning Sam was in critical condition.

A close friend, Bill\*, felt compelled to go to the hospital to pray, be of assistance, and possibly witness to Sam. No one knew whether or not Sam was a believer. He was already unconscious when Bill arrived, and things looked bleak. Bill stayed for the last three hours of Sam's life, never having a chance to speak to him again.

Neighbors had promised to drive Nancy home, but were not there, so Bill asked if he could give her a ride. On the drive, Bill began to ask her about funeral arrangements and if they had a church connection. She shared that Sam had taken her to one church and then another. The way she said it made him ask her, "Where do you think Sam is now?" "I believe he's in heaven," she responded. She knew Sam read his Bible, prayed, and enjoyed attending church. Then Bill asked, "If you died today, where would you be?" Nancy didn't know.

Once home, she showed Bill where the gruesome accident had taken place. As they began to talk, he simply shared the story of God's love for her and His sacrifice so she could go to heaven. Nancy's ready heart easily accepted. Bill told her that she would see Sam again. But inside he wondered if it were really true. Was Sam a born-again believer? Was he really in heaven?

As a new believer and a new widow, she would need spiritual and emotional support now more than ever. Bill suggested she find a church and he asked if Nancy had a Bible.

First, she pulled out the huge Family Bible. Bill said it would do but would be clumsy to read. Did they have something smaller? They

searched for a while. When they had almost given up, Nancy remembered that Sam had a Bible in his study.

Bill took Sam's Bible in his hands and opened the flyleaf. Inside Sam had copied the acrostic G-R-A-C-E with the explanation, "God's riches at Christ's expense." Encouraged, Bill read on. The words leaped off the page. Sam's very first prayer request was for the salvation of his wife.

In tears, Bill shared it with Nancy. "Nancy, I don't understand everything, but I think I know some of what has happened here." Revealed were a husband's love and fervent prayer. His offering of a life. Her new birth.

I wonder if Sam had told God, "Lord, I'll do anything, if only Nancy would come to know You."

### *Jesus' Precious Bride*

Did you know that is exactly the prayer Jesus expressed to God. "Lord, I'll do anything if this dear one, My Precious Bride, would come to know You."

Your Heavenly Father negotiated your bride price with the prospective Groom. Jesus had to be willing to take on all the debt you would ever incur and pay it back in full, before your relationship with Him could take place. For every lie you ever told, there had to be a payment. For every time you lashed out in anger. For every rebellious act. Your prospective Bridegroom had to be willing and able to pay for it all.

And, so He did.

The value that has been assigned to you is one far above jewels. What is the Hope Diamond worth? Your worth is far above that. This value is not based on your behavior. It is not based on your performance. It is based on your position as the chosen, redeemed, blood-bought, greatly loved, purchased Bride of Christ. If you are born again, that is who you are.



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### *Heart Tip:*

What is the Hope  
Diamond worth?  
Your worth is far  
above that.



