

Marriage in the law and the Prophets

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Date: 11 May 2014

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[0 : 00] We look at marriage in the law and the prophets, divorce in the law and the prophets and then on the Wednesday after that we'll pause for breath and then carry on.

! So what is the relevance of this topic? I thought of some reasons why it's relevant. Number one in terms of discipleship because the commission of the Christian gospel is to make disciples.

That's to say to not only teach people the gospel but to teach them how to live in a way that befits the gospel. So the whole question of how people should be disciples in the realm of marriage, in the realm of divorce and sexual ethics generally is a task that is before us.

And as society is less and less, as we might say, traditional, then it's more and more of an issue how we advise people and counsel people and move them into discipleship.

Number two, it's relevant because of the witness to the world. The church of Jesus Christ is meant to exhibit holiness, whatever that looks like in practice, and Christian ethics.

[1 : 21] And the church is meant to be different and to show that it's different to the world without God. And so that should be included in the way we handle this subject.

The purity and existence of the church as the church. The church is meant to be different. I'll turn up the bulb, actually. And we might, without any huge great stretches of the imagination, be pondering who would we have as church members, given where they've come from and what sort of situations they're from and maybe what sort of situations they're in.

So we need to have some clear thinking on that. And then, I think perhaps in a very poignant way, the individual consciences of believers. Because people might be sitting in a chair like you're sitting and thinking, in my marital life, in my history, I've messed things up so badly.

And I've forfeited the Lord's blessing and I'll never find the Lord's blessing again. And I think that would be a terrible thing for people to be sitting and thinking when Jesus Christ is a saviour of grace.

And, yeah, for sure, there might be things that people need to put right in their lives. On the other hand, there might be things that people are thinking they've got wrong, when actually the Bible makes a provision for that.

[2 : 55] And so the consciences of believers, we need to be very thoughtful about people's consciences. And I've put as a fifth relevance, Christian insight and input into framing laws for the nation.

Now, I've put that in brackets because I don't honestly think that we're any longer in a position in society where Christians have any particular right to, say, do things in a Christian way because we're right.

I just don't think that that holds very much water these days. So I put that one in brackets. So there's five thoughts on relevance of this topic.

Would anybody like to suggest any other? Have I missed anything out on that? Yes. If we do things, if we're made by God and we do things according to the maker's instructions, things will be better.

Having said that, we're conscious that we live in a society where people, where in some cases it's a matter of damage limitation. And the Old Testament is actually conscious of that.

[4 : 09] So, okay, we'll move on. So let me next give a little bit of a, what's the word, caveat, a little bit of a warning to say, what we look at in the Old Testament, we're not to just directly say, right, that's in the Bible, we should do that.

So, we are Christians and we live in the kingdom of Christ. And there is a distinction from the law of Moses.

Jesus makes this distinction. The Bible is conscious of this distinction. So, please, can we look at Matthew chapter 5, verse 17.

So, we don't actually need the authorised version for this one. So, 5.17. And perhaps, Maria, could you hand the microphone to Martin?

And Martin could read Matthew 5.17 to us. Just need switching on underneath if it isn't already. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

[5 : 24] I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfil them. Thank you very much. Very interesting thing that Jesus says about the way that he makes the transition from the law and the prophets, the law of Moses and the prophets as they look forward, and what Jesus brings.

He does not abolish. He doesn't say it's all rubbish. He doesn't say that's irrelevant. He doesn't abolish, but he fulfills. And I think we will find that he fulfills, and this will include things like deepening.

So, he'll take the ideas of the law and deepen them for the kingdom. He might refocus them for the kingdom. So, just as an example of that, in the prophets, if somebody was a heretic, I'm putting this in very, in the law rather, if somebody was a heretic, I'm putting this sort of in very rough language, you would stone them to death.

In the New Testament, if there's somebody in the church who's a heretic, unless you're living in the time of the Reformation, what would we normally expect to do with somebody in the church who was not keeping to the gospel?

What would we do with them? Would we stone them? We would expel them from the church. We would say, you don't belong here. And we would, where in the Old Testament, it would be on the focus of actually expelling them by killing them.

[7 : 01] In the New Testament, we would expel them by taking them off the membership role. So, there is a refocusing of things as we go from the Old Testament to the New Testament. And there's an intensification.

I can't think, no, I probably can think, but mostly, Jesus takes the things of the law and intensifies them.

I was just thinking of the food laws that he relaxes, but other things, as we move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, there's a complex transition where Jesus says, I have not abolished, but fulfilled.

So, 5, verse 27 and 28. Could you read that for us, please, Martin? Chapter 5, verse 27 and 28. That's Matthew 5, 27 and 28.

You have heard that it was said, do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

[8 : 05] Thank you. So, you could argue that what Jesus does in that verse is to redefine adultery and move it from simply something external to the internal of the heart.

So, we're moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Number two, to rightly understand, we need to hold together the progressive revelation, because the Bible wasn't written all at once.

It was written as the centuries went by. It's not saying that it went from being wrong to being right, but it was like a darkened room where you gradually switch on the lights and you can see more and more of what's already there.

So, it's important for us to realize that in creation, we have the origin, and that's certainly true about a relationship between man and woman.

Then we have the fall, in which things go all wrong. As we go through the book of Genesis, we have the patriarchs, the fathers, with their lives and their stories before the law.

[9 : 13] And we have the law of Moses. And then as we move on through the Bible, we have things like the prophets, who take the law.

They're still within the Old Covenant. They take the law and they apply it, and they project it forward. And we'll find something of that progression as we go through.

And I'll just remind ourselves that without trying to make it complicated, or any more complicated than it need be, it is good to meditate in the law of the Lord. And I hope that we can catch something of that goodness this evening.

Here's another observation. They lived, the law and the prophets, they lived as one nation under God. The technical term is a theocracy.

God rules. We live in a democracy, in which the people are supposed to rule. You might not have known that.

[10:16] They lived as one nation. So the politics was simple. We're all one nation. And the nation was a mixture of what we would nowadays call born-again people, and those who are not born again.

So the nation included people who had new hearts, like David and Moses and Daniel, who had real faith, and people who didn't.

They were still Israelites. They were still within the covenant, but they didn't have new hearts. And the laws reflected that fact. And Jesus will, as we look at it later, will say, Moses said that because of the hardness of your hearts, that the people he was speaking to, some of them at least, had hard hearts, unchanged hearts.

But in the New Testament, in principle at least, all the people in the New Testament covenant are born-again people.

So they lived as one nation, a mixed-up nation under God. We live as mini-communities, born-again people, in many different nations, in many different legal frameworks, in many different societies.

[11:28] And whereas they were under God, to whatever extent, our nations do not particularly serve Christ.

And if we're thinking of legislation for the nation at large, of course, we can't assume that people have any particular desire to obey God at all.

And as we shall see, there are many other societal differences. So as we read, as we show in the moment, the stories of Abraham, there was no such thing as the children going off to university.

There was no such thing as a woman going off to be a graphic designer in London. The way the economy worked was very much linked to being in a family and being provided for either by your father or by your husband.

So that's a difference too. And let me give one other, no, a couple of other examples. In the Old Testament, the ideal, the normal situation, is marriage.

[12:48] And to be unmarried is thought of as unusual. And you could even go a bit further and say within the covenant people, there is a pressure to have children.

And you could even say that within the Old Testament, there are certainly some stories in which it is a sinful thing not to have children.

So the idea of having children is very much part of the way the Old Covenant works. because the Old Covenant, the covenant where God took one nation and said to Abraham, these are your children and I'm going to bless your children and your children's children and your children's children and through your seed all the world will be blessed.

That depends on having seed. It depends on having the next generation biologically. And that was the way God advanced his purposes. And so to not have children deliberately was to reject God's purposes.

And to be unmarried and particularly to be incapable of having children, well, if it was a man, Leviticus 21, 20, you needn't look that one up, but it says that a man who is incapable of having children would be excluded from worshipping God.

[14:13] from going into the temple. So that's quite a different situation to the kingdom. And we can look at Matthew 19, 12.

And the disciples are a bit shocked at this. So could Martin again, please read for us, I think, Matthew 19, 11 and 12.

Jesus replied, Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way.

Others were made that way by men. And others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it. Okay, so that's an interesting thing that in the Old Testament to be incapable of producing children was something of a disgrace.

But Jesus says, actually in the New Testament, there are some who have made themselves that way or chosen that way for the kingdom. And that's an honorable thing.

[15:32] So there's a difference. Paul, you remember, Paul, the Apostle Paul, said singleness has got many advantages and it is not an unblest state as it might have appeared in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it's a wee bit different.

And let me give you, oh, I think I've already said this. In the Law and the Prophets, yes, in the Law and the Prophets, marriages are, we'll see this coming up, within, usually within the tribe, definitely within the nation for the genetic purposes of Abraham's seed being propagated down through

history and for religious purposes because if you married somebody outside Israel, you were almost certainly marrying somebody who was an idolater and somebody therefore who would almost certainly tempt you into worshipping their national god which would be a disaster.

So the whole, one of the directions of the Old Testament is to say we want a nation to grow, we want more children and we want to keep them worshipping the Lord.

So there's that purpose in the Law and the Prophets. But in the Kingdom, there's no such fearfulness in the sense that there's no sense that the New Testament says you've got to marry people from your own tribe and it doesn't say you've got to marry people from your own nation and it doesn't say you've got to marry people from your own racial group because the New Testament suddenly goes ballistically international.

So all of those are things to say we must be careful not just to take a verse from the Old Testament and say I read that directly that applies to me and I'll just do directly what it says without thinking carefully how it fits into the whole scheme of things moving forward.

[17:41] Is that okay? Okay. So let's try and get our heads round marriage in the Law and the Prophets.

And the way rightly or wrongly the way I chose to have a go at this was by looking at the main words. So the main words that we would look at suppose we were looking into you're looking this up in Google trying to find out about marriage in European society you would probably Google husband wife bride bridegroom son-in-law marriage wedding engagement and you might even look at adultery.

You look at those sorts of words and you begin to pick up a picture particularly if you looked up marriages or weddings find loads of stuff wouldn't you about wedding dresses wedding venues a lot of wedding venues or wedding presents loads and loads of stuff and you pick up what happens in weddings.

Right so that's what I thought I would do with my concordance looking up so I started with husband and I found there is no word in Hebrew for husband there is no word in Hebrew which means husband there is the word for man there are a few words for man one is Adam which means man one is Ish and you could look this up if you had a strong concordance it's word 0376 it's I haven't put the statistics of how many times it's used but it's translated in the authorised version man or men 1212 times it's translated as one so even in the authorised version it wasn't always gender specific in its translation 188 times and husband 69 times we'll look at that in a moment there is also a word I should have warned you at the beginning you won't like all of this anyway there is also a word Baal and Baal as in the Canaanite God Baal if you go to the I think we went to the museum in the Louvre and there were little statues of Baal there this is the god that the Canaanites used to worship and they called him Baal because Baal means Lord and Lord is a noun he is Lord and it can be used as a verb to Lord to bring somebody under your lordship or to be in a relationship of lordship and the word Baal and when it's used of a human being I think this is translated by the authorised version 82 times it is man 25 times it is translated owner 14 times and translated husband 11 times interesting

[21:11] Baal yeah yes yep yep so how does so if you if you say there's a man how can you tell whether he's married or not well the answer is you'd say he's her man and it's the use of that possessive pronoun if he's her man then they're married see this again this way with wife wife any of you know French yes yes what's the word for the for the for the wife of monsieur somebody or other and what's the word for woman so interestingly in French too you can have the same word for woman and wife and the difference is it's my woman meaning my wife so when you bring it into a possessive say it's my woman then you're saying it's my wife there's no word in

Hebrew to differentiate between a woman and a wife there is the word isha man is ish woman is isha this is word 0802 it's used 779 times you'd be pleased to know I didn't actually count them it does tell me in the concordance how many times it's used it's translated 323 times woman 425 times wife and some other translation 10 times and here we have the same thing when it's possessive when it's to say my woman or his woman then it means wife let's look at Genesis 2 21 to 25 Genesis 2 21 to 25 I think we'll let Maria read this because otherwise she'll think I've given her the microphone under false pretences

Genesis 2 21 to 25 and I'd like you to notice where it the translation will change from woman to wife so Genesis 2 21 to 25 22 and the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof and the rib which the Lord God

had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man and Adam said this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh and they were both naked the man and his wife and were not ashamed thank you very much so let me try and uncover what's going on in the original language so it says in verse 22 the Lord God made an isha out of the rib or the side he had taken out of the ish so out of the ish the man comes an ish and therefore a man an ish shall cleave to or be united to his ish and actually changes the word for man in verse 25 then adam the man and his ish were both naked and they felt no shame so you notice that woman has moved to wife although in Hebrew it's the same word but it's just changed the meaning because it's her and his isn't it the ish verse 25 and his isha so if it's his isha then we understand it to mean his wife and in verse 6 of chapter 3 verse 6 of chapter 3 could you read that for us

Maria please and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat thank you so the isha the woman saw that the woman or wife saw that the fruit was good and she gave it to her man and our translations say her husband but what she says is her man did you get the idea marry be a very helpful word to look up there is no Hebrew word for marry let's sing something shall we so we're looking at this word which you think might yield a little bit more than man and woman seemed to yield so there is no [27 : 13] Hebrew word for marry imagine my disappointment as I look this up and find there are two main words and the first word is to take which I think is!

So the NIV says X married Y but the Hebrew says X took Y as Isha so now Maria can you find Genesis 11 29 Abraham and Nahor took them wives the name of Abraham's wife was Sarai and the name of Nahor's wife was Milca the daughter of Haran the father of Milca and the father of Isca okay so I don't know whether you were tuned in when Maria started that sentence because if you had the NIV it says Abraham Abraham and Nahor both married which seems fair enough but what Maria said just read us that phrase again Abraham and Nahor took them wives and this is characteristic it's repeated

I went through about 70 references checking them and they say the same thing so and so took such and such as wife or took so and so to wife or whatever it is and if you look at Genesis 25 1 please could you read that for us wait a minute don't read it until even the NIV will agree on this so Maria Genesis 25 1 Abraham took a wife and her name was Keturah okay there's the verb NIV says took he doesn't say married another wife but it's what the Hebrew says he took a wife interestingly you see in this is part of the thing where we're entitled to go carefully from the Old Testament to the New Testament Abraham had multiple wives so I don't want us to say well

Abraham did that it's in the Bible so we could do that I mean that would not be a correct way of reading the Bible and there are also other distinctions that are made so Genesis 36 12 this is an obscure reference I don't think even somebody with a really good memory for the Bible would be able to do this one from memory Genesis 36 12 thank you Maria thank you interesting so NIV says had a concubine named Timna the authorised version says was concubine so

I think the took I've made a mistake in using the take word there because it's not in that it was concubine now what's a concubine I tried to do a bit of research on this it's not sure whether I've got it I think it's not doesn't sound like a proper Hebrew word it's got too many syllables in it there's a suspicion that it comes from Greek I'm not quite sure how that would work there's another realm of study of what a concubine is a concubine is somebody who's in a more or less permanent relationship woman with a man and yet is of less status than a wife now I don't really know how that works but it's obviously a recognised thing because here she it doesn't try to tell us that she was a wife it says no she was a concubine so I'm just going to pass that by and now

[31 : 33] I'm going to come back to taking and I'm going to say that others could be involved in taking so Genesis 21 21 thank you Maria when we get back to that one Genesis 21 21 and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt thank you so if this is interesting isn't it his mother took him a wife so it wasn't just that he went and took a wife but his mother said excuse me I'll do this and takes a wife for him this is sort of the dream of mothers all over the world isn't it if I could sort out my son by just taking a wife for him so this is so other people could do this and in Genesis 24 a servant is involved in taking a wife the

NIV said get but it was the verb to take so let's look at Genesis 24 this is Abraham in his older years wanting a wife for his son Isaac and so he gets his servant to travel all the way back to the tribal homeland to find a suitable wife and this is interesting because it's to do with marrying within the family the family who would have the same religious affiliation as oneself and so could you read us 24 3 please Maria and I will make thee swear by the Lord the God of heaven and the God of the earth that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son Isaac so this servant has got this huge task of taking a wife for his for his master's son so it's in there to take an isha in verse 7 it says Abraham said I've got that right end of verse 7 so that you can take a wife for my son from there verse 38 could you read that to us please verse 37 and 38 and my master made me swear saying thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell but thou shalt go unto my father's house and to my kindred and take a wife unto my son so into the same thing there and verse 40 I think says the same thing so it's repeated time and time again and we find another feature of marriage which is in verse 53 could actually verse 53 and verse 54 could you read that for us

Maria and the servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment and gave them to Rebecca he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things and they did eat and drink he and the men that were with him and tarried all night and they rose up in the morning and he said send me away unto my master so associated with this is the exchange of money so we do find the payment in the old testament the payment of the bride's family for the loss of the bride or in exchange for the bride and so something of that going on there and we'll see that again later and then if we come to the sort of fulfillment of it all in verse 66 so verse 67 so she's been taken from her father's home brought back all the miles to the chap that she's going to marry to Isaac and this is what happens next so 66 67 please and the servant told Isaac all things that he had done and Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and took Rebecca and she became his wife and he loved her and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death thank you very much so that's that's the that's the marriage she's taken no she's taken from her father's house there's a feast there's an exchange of money and she's brought in to a new place to live into the tent of his mother Sarah who is deceased is she not and the word marry is there but what it just says is she became Isha she became wife and he loved her so in all the things we've looked at this is the first time

[37 : 27] I think we've seen the word love interesting balance of thoughts isn't it it's not all about love at least the text we've looked at but there is love and it's here and that's it so it's a taking bringing bringing into a new place and that's the she's now married she's now his isha and he is now her ish so let's look at the second word to marry which is not used so often and this is this word bail which is to lord okay I should have said that you might not like all this but this is a word translated marry to come into the relationship of having a lord or being protected by a lord so let's look at Deuteronomy 22 verse 22 if a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband then they shall both of them die both the man that lay with the woman and the woman so shalt thou put away evil from

Israel okay thank you very much so that that's yeah that's what it says NIV says sleeping with well you said lying with another man's wife it it we'll come back to that the death penalty very interesting the very fierce sense of a boundary that if it's another man's isha that that boundary is fiercely guarded so if somebody's found sleeping with this woman lying with this woman they both face the death penalty very very strong and then there's some other provisions and I'll read these in verse 23 if a man happens to meet in town a virgin pledged to be married and there's a whole thing about what this betrothing means and he lies with her you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help and the man because he violated another man's wife is that what it says yeah I should have looked that up a little bit more carefully you must purge the evil from among you so I thought this was an engaged girl but

I'll have to look that back up again it's typical of the sort of wisdom of the law of Moses it's legislating for an unpleasant situation and saying what do we make of it well if it was in a town and she'd screamed chances are somebody would have heard her so if she didn't we assume then that she didn't scream and they both face the death penalty verse 25 says okay this same thing happens in the country if in the country a man happens to meet a girl pledged to be married and rapes her only

the man who has done this shall die do nothing to the girl she has committed no sin deserving death the case is like that of someone who attacks and murders his neighbor for the man found the girl out in the country and though the betrothed girl screamed there was no one to rescue her so it's just the the man who faces the death penalty verse 28 if a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered he shall pay the girl's father 50 shekels of silver so it's like the payment of a dowry he must marry the girl for he has violated her he can never divorce her as long as he lives very interesting provisions there

I mean I think we try and look at it a little bit dispassionately notice here there is no possibility of divorce in this case there was provision for divorce in other cases but in this particular case there's no provision for divorce I'm sorry I haven't done that exactly correctly but let's come back to let's come back to the verse 22 and of course what we were actually looking at was the word bail verse 22 if a man is found sleeping with another man's wife if a man is found lying with an isha lorded to a lord that's what it says in Hebrew she's bailed to a bail that's an interesting use why it suddenly goes into bail there doesn't it she's under the protection of she's under the jurisdiction of another man and this third party has no business breaking into that boundary and we have the same thing in

Genesis 20 verse 3 the reason we're looking at this is the use of the word bail to mean to marry but it also points out some other interesting things as well so this is Abraham whose wife Sarah was actually his half sister and when he went to different places because she was such an attractive woman he rather took the coward's way out and said that she's my sister he didn't own up to her being his wife in case somebody powerful thought that they would like to nick her and that she would become their wife and Abraham would end up being bumped!

[43 : 33] off so it wasn't a very noble strategy for Abraham to follow Maria could you read us 20 verse 3 this is when Abraham stays with the pagan Abimelech but God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him behold thou art but a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken for she is a man's wife thank you so notice the same thing there and this is in a pagan situation you are as good as dead so the death penalty sort of applies to you because the woman you have taken now he hadn't actually got as far as marrying her or having sexual relations with her but the same phrase is there she's a man's wife literally she's lorded to a lord and I find it interesting that that same phrase is used there so we've got these two words for marry to take which we've seen and to lord and as we've gone past it we notice how fiercely this idea guards the boundaries of marriage and even though we say well there's no description of how the marriage you know what form of words was said or anything like that yet nevertheless they had a very clear idea that somebody was or was not married and when they were within that arrangement of marriage the boundaries are fiercely fiercely protected!

So Abraham had two wives within that boundary as I said before we don't just copy the Old Testament and say we do exactly the same thing but there's that strong boundary and the relations within it are very strongly protected and you see from the things about the rape of the woman and so on that the idea of sex outside that boundary is also fiercely protected I haven't proved that properly but we do see it in passing well I will speed on now and it will become a little less coherent so I thought we'll at least look at the word wedding there's no technical word for wedding either and the idea you look in vain in the Old!

Testament to see the people of God saying shall we have a registry office wedding or shall we have a church wedding because there just is no such thing the nearest I could easily find for a blow by blow description of a wedding is in Genesis 29 verses 14 to 30 which is the wedding of Jacob to the daughter of Laban or in fact to the daughters of Laban Laban Jacob is a shrewd scheming chap you probably wouldn't want to buy a used car from him but Laban is even more shrewd and scheming and you definitely wouldn't try and marry one of his daughters so in Genesis 29 verse 14 after Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month Laban said to him just because you're a relative of mine should you work for me for nothing tell me what your wages should be now Laban had two daughters the name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel Leah had not quite sure of the translation weak eyes but Rachel was lovely in form and beautiful Jacob loved Rachel and said I'll work for you for seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel so you see there's a payment involved here and Laban says it's better that I give her to you than some other man stay here with me so Jacob served seven years to get Rachel but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her which I think is such a wonderful

expression isn't it the days just flew by because he loved her so much and Jacob said to Laban then Jacob said to Laban verse 21 give me my wife my time is completed I want to go into her go in as in go into a tent that she's in sort of so you see the father is being asked to give the daughter and so Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast so you have a feast so it's marked in a sort of public way when the evening came he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob and Jacob lay with her and Laban gave his servant girl

Zilpah to his daughter as her maid servant when the morning came there was Leah how did that work presumably they didn't have very good illumination in those days and Jacob says hold on this wasn't what I agreed I'm sure this is the wrong woman what is this you've done to me I served you for Rachel didn't I why have you deceived me well actually Jacob you're quite a deceiver yourself but anyway Laban replied oh it's not our custom to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one finish this daughter's week the word bridal isn't there in the original and I'll give you the younger one also in return for another seven years so you end up with two wives got to be a bargain you have to pay for both of them seven years work for both I've already had seven years work so you can marry this one and have the the next seven years you'll pay it off Jacob did so he finished the week with Leah and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife Laban etc etc etc it's very dysfunctional because this arrangement really doesn't work well at all but there are some features

[49 : 31] I think we would recognize the father gives the woman is as it were taken from her father's tent into into Jacob's tent the people gather there is a bringing and a giving a transfer of guardianship from father's house to husband's house there is love there is a dowry the only other thing I could come across about weddings was the clothing Isaiah 61 10 says 61 10 says as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest now he has arrayed me as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels so that's Isaiah 61 10 a little bit of a sort of a proverbial saying isn't it that the bride remembers the wonderful clothes that she wore presumably on her wedding day and you get the same sort of reference in Jeremiah 2 32 does a maiden forget her jewellery or a bride her wedding ornaments so that's the nearest

I could get to a blow by blow wedding there's a taking a give sorry a taking to wife the father giving a moving from one almost from one tent to another tent it's marked with a feast sometimes as a payment do you remember that David said he was a bit embarrassed about marrying the the daughter of Saul do you remember he said what can I pay and you remember what what the payment was it was indeed so I move swiftly on and say bridegroom it was used there I looked up the word bridegroom and bride and to my disappointment the word bridegroom is exactly the same as the word son-in-law and the word bride is the same word as daughter-in-law so I suppose what it the common factor being this is a member of my family by marriage so if you're a father you say he's a member of my family by marriage he's my son-in-law if you're the woman you say he's a member of my family by marriage he's my bridegroom and likewise the other way round and one other thing of these hundreds of examples of taking as a wife and scores of examples of being lauded and lauded how many times do you think we find in the Old

Testament that marriage is likened to a covenant definitely once and I think only once could be I might not have looked it up rightly but if you're quick you can correct me but it might then be twice but interestingly it's certainly not hundreds of times Malachi 2 14 says the Lord is acting as witness between you and the wife of your youth because you have broken faith with her though she is your partner the wife of your marriage covenant so it says that once and have you got the Jeremiah reference for us well I haven't started preparing it yet so it would be

Jeremiah 31 wouldn't it Jeremiah 31 31 yes so here is a likening of God's relationship God's covenant with Israel to a marriage relationship but I was really surprised at how little that that is said the idea of breaking the relationship with God being like adultery comes up quite a lot and there's a whole reference to what the authorised version would say whoredoms and whore we would probably say prostitute and prostitution and that goes right the way through the Bible starting quite early on but still the the the lightning of marriage to a covenant is very very sparing so I'm looking at the clock and I'm thinking we've probably had enough you can have let's have a think about that by next time and if you think there's something you didn't cover something I was unsure of we can try and do it next time please turn to Hosea chapter 3 verse 1 so Hosea is a later prophet not back in time the law of Moses excuse me and he is conscious of the wrongness of adultery but this is what the Lord reveals to him and this is how the Lord speaks to him so Hosea 3

verse 1

[55 : 29] I'll read it the Lord well I'll wait until everybody's found it actually Hosea 3 verse 1 the Lord said to me that's to the prophet go show your love to your wife again although she is loved by another and is an adulteress although she's broken the rules though she's unfaithful she's messed everything up show your love to her again love her as the Lord loves the Israelites and I would like to finish on that note because it's so beautiful we've described how marriage ought to work and some of the sort of structures and boundaries of it but here is the Lord saying well my people mess up the structures and boundaries of my relationship with them and the best way for you to understand it is of the love that this husband this wronged husband shows to his wife he goes back and loves her again even though she's been unfaithful to him and the

Lord says you love her because that's the way I love my people isn't that beautiful that's the way I love my people let's close then by singing 909