

## Torah Portion: Matot (Numbers 30:1-32:42)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding the community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to, as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/> ]

This week's portion is a double with this first section offering some serious lessons on headship and patriarchy.

Numbers 30 is a very powerful chapter undergirding the roles and responsibilities of man and woman while also clearly demonstrating the great disadvantage of a woman who was divorced or widowed.

Over and over in Scripture, beginning in the Creation story and supported throughout not only the Torah, but all following books is a clear message of authority structure, coalesced into a single sentence by the Apostle Paul,

**1 Corinthians 11:<sup>3</sup>** But I want you to understand that Messiah is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Messiah.

Simply, as illustrated before,

God => Messiah => man => woman

As we have traversed the Torah portions thus far, we have also considered the importance of a woman being covered. Simply, in Israel, a woman was in dire straits if not under the protection and covering of a man, whether her father or husband. She had no advocate in the city gates or among the elders. She could most likely not buy or sell property without a covering (even Proverbs 31, often quoted, was about a woman under the authority of her husband.).

Numbers 30 really brings to the fore the authority of a man in the life of a woman.

Before going any further, I want to be clear, patriarchy and headship is *not* a cultural issue or some misogynistic social failing of the ancient world. *This is by God's design, from the creation of Adam!* More sharply, it matters not what a woman thinks or feels or what our current feministic dysfunctional culture asserts. What matters alone is the restoration and implementation of God's design. Obedience to His Word demands that we wrestle with and come into compliance with His authority structure and His design for marriage, family, clan and tribe.

That said, Numbers 30 offers a very clear message on several levels of the authority and responsibility of a man for his family.

**Numbers 30** Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which the Lord has commanded. <sup>2</sup> If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Notice, man has no 'get out of vow free card.' And, like almost all of the commandments, it is specifically addressed to the 'sons of Israel.' It is, as we have revealed multiple times, the duty of the 'sons' to teach the commands in their homes to those under their authority. God always operates within and honors His own authority structure.

The man answers to Messiah Yeshua *alone* and is responsible to his Head, Yeshua, for all that happens within his sphere of authority.

As such, man is responsible for the vows that come out of the mouths of his women, whether his daughters or his woman/women (wife/wives). Notice the rest of Numbers 30!! Here is the remainder of the chapter:

**Numbers 30:** <sup>3</sup> "Also if a woman makes a vow to the Lord, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth, <sup>4</sup> and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. <sup>5</sup> But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears *of it*, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her **because** her father had forbidden her.

<sup>6</sup>“However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself, <sup>7</sup> and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears *it*, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand. <sup>8</sup> But if on the day her husband hears *of it*, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the Lord will forgive her.

<sup>9</sup>“But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her. <sup>10</sup> However, if she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath, <sup>11</sup> and her husband heard *it*, but said nothing to her *and* did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand. <sup>12</sup> But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears *them*, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the Lord will forgive her.

<sup>13</sup>“Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it. <sup>14</sup> But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them. <sup>15</sup> But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt.”

<sup>16</sup> These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses, *as* between a man and his wife, *and as* between a father and his daughter, *while she is* in her youth in her father’s house.

Notice the following key discussion points from this chapter:

- A husband and father has the authority to interpose himself, as a type of Messiah, for his woman and/or daughter(s). This is supported by Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33, a passage we have referred to multiple times.
- Specifically, Num. 30:5 says, ‘...YHVH will *forgive her BECAUSE* her father has forbidden’ the oath or vow. Then in v. 15 it says that if the man annuls a vow that *he*

bears the iniquity of that which he annulled. This is very much a priestly/Messianic function and a clear affirmation of the role and weight of headship.

- No such protection exists for a divorcee or a widow (v.9) affirming yet again that she needs to come under the covering of a man (I Tim. 5) except that she be much older (1 Tim. 5:9). According to Paul, younger women were to marry (1 Tim. 5:14) and only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39)
- Some may not be very happy with Num. 30 being used to support headship reasoning that the passage is narrowly limited to ‘vows and oaths,’ however, the larger context of Scripture dispels the idea that headship in this specific passage is limited to only oaths and vows. (See Gen. 1-3; 1 Cor. 11; Eph. 5; 1 Tim 2, 5; Titus 2; etc....) Numbers 30 illustrates well the degree of authority the man has.
- In a very patriarchal impartation, v.1 tells us clearly that this particular set of instruction was given to the heads of the tribes presumably to be disseminated through the authority structure.
- That last bullet refers to the previously explained fact that there are almost no commands, if any, given directly to women. YHWH instituted His authority structure in the Garden and then chooses to operate through it. Over and over, like Adam, the sons of Israel are given commands that they are then responsible to implement within their area of authority. This has been and continues to be demonstrated throughout this Torah Commentary series..

Above bullets, with slight modification, taken from an original blog post over a year ago.

<https://natsab.com/2019/08/05/musings-re-headship-and-numbers-30-31/>

I want to take a detour here and share a post concerning shame and reproach. In Numbers 30:9 we read the following,

**Numbers 30:9** “But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

Culturally, we do not see anything wrong with divorce or single women in society, yet that was not and is never God’s design for His creation. In fact, over and over in Scripture, a divorced woman or a widowed woman who did not remarry was considered to be a harlot, a shameful and unworthy person. This is a hard message to our culture, but it is everlasting truth.

Here is an article that directly addresses this situation in our culture. It was also an original article published on natsab.com.

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## Shame, Reproach and the Image of Marriage

Posted on [January 2, 2020](#) by [Pete Rambo](#)



Honor and shame are concepts almost completely lost on western culture. We watch memes, gifs and video clips of foibles and disasters that befall others and consider it humorous to mock and laugh at their misfortune. We even encourage and rejoice in the sin and shame inducing behavior of others while entirely ignoring our own reproach for things Scripture considers abhorrent. Our culture ignores widows and orphans, glorifies divorce, practices all manner of sexual deviance, encourages abortion and we are generally irresponsible toward all but self.

In fact, like a man with no sense of smell, we have become a people entirely unaware of our own stench or that of those around us. Like pigs, we wallow in our filth and think it okay, maybe even funny. We glorify our stench.

As I have been studying Scripture regarding the two houses of Israel, God's relationship with each house and His use of the relationship between man and woman to image Himself and His people, I have become increasingly aware of how very wretched we are on so many levels, and, how wrong is our theology.

One of the deep concepts that God refers to over and over is that of shame and reproach, so I had to begin to search out why God uses this concept and what we need to understand in both the spiritual and the physical dimension. Foundationally, there are several basic concepts that must be understood. If these are new to you, I recommend reading and processing the links to gain understanding and insight.

First, and covered in many places and ways on this blog, is the fact that God's grand plan, His great Work, is the [restoration of the Kingdom of Israel](#). Yeshua declares this as His purpose in Acts 1:6-7, something [I wrote about several years ago](#). More recently, as co-author Jeremy and I are explaining in our [Restoring Kol Israel](#) series, we are seeing in Scripture that this restoration is a very real, physical, in our day restoration of *both houses* of Israel! I cannot begin to explain how incredibly real and amazing this is!! As we explain, the restoration is beginning at the family level and progressing from there. As men learn Torah and walk it out, their families are restored, and they are called to increasing levels of obedience and righteousness that begin and fuel restoration of kol (all) Israel. Restored families begin to gather and form a clan or a community allowing further application and obedience with regard to Torah which will then foster growth of larger connectivity toward tribal and national restoration.

The second major concept that is related is understanding the role of marriage and family both in the micro (personal) level, and in the macro (community) level. To fully understand the restoration of the two houses, one must understand that [God has two brides](#). Scripture attests to this in multiple places, and the battle between the two is the story of Ephraim and Judah. God couches *everything in Scripture* within the construct of a plural, or [Biblical marriage](#). Until one can wrap their minds fully around this fact, they cannot completely understand the restoration process in either the spiritual, or in the physical. Physically, the story begins with Jacob, Leah, and Rachel. Spiritually, the image is God, Judah, and Ephraim.

The final concept we must grapple with is that marriage is an image of the Messiah and the qahal/ekklesia/church/congregation. Most of Christendom readily accepts this as Paul clearly states it, *but they do not understand that God has two brides, nor do they fully apply the image of Messiah and the church to marriage*. Ephesians 5:22-33 spells out the relationship between man and woman and draws the clear comparison to Messiah and the church. Paul expounds on this understanding in multiple other passages. See, for example, Paul's commentary in 1 Corinthians 11:3-15. Most understand this to mean something about a hat or doily on a woman's head but do not understand the direct connection to the Torah principle of a [man acting as the woman's covering](#). (e.g., Numbers 5:11-31) The bottom line is that a woman who has no covering, no head/man, is considered to be in a shameful or reproachful position.

God has an order and an authority structure. Every single human *has value*, however each has a respective place in the order of creation as well as in the kingdom. Be careful

not to confuse value and role. By way of illustration, horses and cows both have *value* on a farm, but their *roles* differ.

With relation to our topic, man is to portray the image of Messiah and woman is to portray the image of the qahal/congregation. If either is not operating according to their role, they are in a shameful or reproachful condition. Consider the abundance of Scriptures wherein the adulterous brides, Judah and Ephraim, are reminded of their shame and reproach. There are too many to list, but here are three examples:

**Ezekiel 5:13** *“Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the Lord, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them. 14 Moreover, I will make you **a desolation and a reproach** among the nations which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by. 15 So it will be **a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the nations who surround you when I execute judgments against you in anger**, wrath and raging rebukes. I, the Lord, have spoken. 16 When I send against them the deadly arrows of famine which were for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you, then I will also intensify the famine upon you and break the staff of bread. 17 Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, the Lord, have spoken.”*

**Psalms 79:1** *O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance;  
They have defiled Your holy temple;  
They have laid Jerusalem in ruins.  
2 They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens,  
The flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth.  
3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem;  
And there was no one to bury them.  
4 **We have become a reproach** to our neighbors,  
**A scoffing and derision** to those around us.  
5 How long, O Lord? Will You be angry forever?  
Will Your jealousy burn like fire?*

**Ezekiel 36:13** *“Thus says the Lord God, ‘Because they say to you, “You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children,” 14 therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,’ declares the Lord God. 15 “I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer,” declares the Lord God.”*

*16 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 17 “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. 20 When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.’ 21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.*

Throughout Scripture, the image God uses to reveal Himself and His plan is that of marriage. He *created* Israel to be under His covering. In like manner, He created Eve to be under Adam’s covering. In fact, throughout Scripture it is a shameful thing, a matter of reproach, when Israel, whether the house of Judah or the house of Israel, is *not under the covering of God*. That is called rebellion. And when they place themselves under the covering of idols, false gods, or other nations, they are viewed by God as adulterous. (e.g. Ezekiel 23)

Just as with Israel and Judah, anytime man or woman is not operating within God’s design, Scripture regards that as shameful or a reproach. An example of this is Rachel. When she was barren, she and others regarded it as a matter of shame. Genesis 30:22-23 says, “Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, ‘God has taken away my reproach.’” In this case, Rachel’s reproach is because she cannot fulfill her God-given purpose of bearing children.

In a similar manner, anytime a woman is uncovered, or, not the help meet of a man, it is a matter of shame or of reproach. Culturally, we now accept it as perfectly normal for a



woman to be divorced, single, on her own, etc. But Scripture *never* paints this picture; in fact, quite the opposite. She is in a state of shame that can only be removed by coming under the protective covering of a man, whether father, son, or husband. (e.g. Numbers 30) This is part of the reason why Paul says young widows are to be married, lest they give the enemy occasion for reproach!! I Timothy 5:14 (see 1-16)

If Messiah and the congregation are mirrored by man and woman, then Israel's reproachful independence of Messiah is a mirror of woman's reproach when she is not covered by a man.

Hear the heart of Yah for Israel in Isaiah 54. The whole chapter matters, but consider these verses especially,

**Isaiah 54** *"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child;  
Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed;  
For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous  
Than the sons of the married woman," says the Lord.*  
*2 "Enlarge the place of your tent;  
Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not;  
Lengthen your cords  
And strengthen your pegs.*  
*3 "For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left.  
And your descendants will possess nations  
And will resettle the desolate cities.*  
***4 "Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;  
And do not 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.***  
*5 "For your husband is your Maker,  
Whose name is the Lord of hosts;  
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,  
Who is called the God of all the earth.*  
*6 "For the Lord has called you,  
Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,  
Even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,"  
Says your God.*

There is another beautiful image of this rolling away of reproach in Joshua 5. After crossing the Jordan and coming into the Land, Israel reenters covenant with Yah and all the men are circumcised.

**Joshua 5:8** *Now when they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. 9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.*

*10 While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho.*

(A side note: the Groom shows up right after this in Joshua 5:13-15!!)

I have additional thoughts exploding in my head right now regarding the fact that the men were circumcised, not the women... Men are under the headship of God/Messiah (I Cor. 11:3), but women are under the headship of a man. When a virgin is taken into her husband's house, she has a bloody show at the time she enters into covenant with *him*. So it is when a man is circumcised and brought into the bond of the covenant with Yah!

When a man does *not* perform his duty of covering a daughter of Israel that he is supposed to cover, then *he* bears the shame. Consider the case of levirate marriage – and especially Ruth – wherein a man turns down his responsibility.

**Deuteronomy 25:7** *But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' 8 Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, '**I do not desire to take her,**' 9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and **pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face;** and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' 10 In Israel his name shall be called, 'The house of him whose sandal is removed.'*

**Ruth 4:7** *Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. 8*

*So the closest relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.*

If he refuses, her shame *becomes* his shame. *He bears the shame* and it is *his name* that is tarnished in Israel! He has a duty to cover her shame and restore her honor, just as the Messiah chose to act for his wayward brides. (See Jeremiah 3 and Ezekiel 23. While Judah has never been out of covenant, she most certainly has acted the harlot and needs to be redeemed and covered in the same manner that Israel does!!)

The spiritual relationship between Yah and Judah/Israel is identical to the physical relationship between man and woman. The two are a mirror. Our relationship with God is directly reflected by how we understand and walk out the relationship between man and woman. A man who does not lead, protect, love, or provide for the woman (or women) God places under his covering demonstrates that he has no understanding of the relationship between God and Israel. If he treats his woman with unrighteousness, then he proves that he does not understand how Messiah treats the congregation. Likewise, a woman who does not walk in submission to a man, or who does not *seek out covering* as Tamar, Naomi, and Ruth did, does not understand what Scripture says regarding shame and reproach. She has little understanding of God’s role for her and His plan in her life.

As we learn about and understand the restoration of kol Israel, one verse keeps coming to mind that helped initiate this whole study:

***Isaiah 4:1*** *For seven women will take hold of one man in that day, saying, “We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; **take away our reproach!**”*

The day is coming when women will realize their shame and their reproach if they are in an uncovered state. This will be true of the house of Israel as a whole, but also of the individual daughters of Zion. And men will cease to allow or in any way enable their impossible position by ignoring their plight or turning a blind eye to uncovered ladies. Righteous men will provide cover for those ladies who desire a Godly man and righteous women will take the initiative like Tamar, Ruth and Avigail. When a woman embraces her role as being covered and the man performs his duty of covering, both are restored!

As a body we need to cease to see divorced, widowed or single women as ‘okay.’ They are not. The restoration of kol Israel demands that we begin to be intentional about the

covering and protecting of our ladies. We must be intentional about removing their shame and reproach, and as we do, *our shame, individually and corporately* will be removed!

We must begin to earnestly seek Yah asking that He break our hearts for the uncovered. Ask that He show us the depth of their shame in *His* eyes. Ask that He prepare us and show us how to move forward in His will.

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Making the cultural shift to recognizing that a divorcee or widow is to be pitied, not glorified (as our culture is want to do), is a big one. Often the first question, after recognizing the disparity in number of marriageable women v marriageable men (women outnumber men by a widening margin as both grow older), is ‘how do we solve this impossible riddle in a ‘monogamy-only’ culture. There aren’t enough good men to go around.

Our next chapter, Numbers 31, illustrates this with 12,000 warriors divvying up 16,000 maidens. Simple math creates a conundrum that Christendom solves by promptly ignoring it and assuming these young virgins were going to be house servants. Really??! That is radically anti-Torah as single women who have passions, as Paul describes, need to marry and bear children.

So, before we leave the divorcee and widow issue and issue, let us consider God’s solution to their problem with Godly covering.

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## Where have all the good men gone?

Posted on [June 15, 2019](#) by [Pete Rambo](#)

***Exodus 1:***<sup>22</sup>*Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.”*

The Hebrews were multiplying and the new king in Egypt was getting nervous. He began with enslaving the Hebrews and making their lives miserable through forced labor, but

when that did not stymie their obedience to 'be fruitful and multiply' the Pharaoh commanded that the boys be thrown into the Nile and the girls be left alive. Presumably, he thought to destroy the seed and future headship in one fell swoop.



While we do not know how many were thrown into the Nile or otherwise killed, but we can understand from the grave dangers facing Moses as a child that the dangers were exceedingly great and many sons of Israel died in this type of Shoah. Did it leave a generation of women wringing their hands and

wondering how to fulfill God-given desires and Creation order? Did Israel simply allow their precious daughters to leave the fold and seek men elsewhere because of the shortage? Maybe they all just became old maids and spinstresses? Is this even relevant today?

I've heard the question quite a few times in recent years. "Where have all the good (Godly) men gone?"

Even ten years ago, before leaving the institutional church, I was involved in multiple ministries and several congregations where I would hear the question. And, almost always, there were more single women than men. Often, women outnumbered men by a ratio of 2:1.

Once my wife and I began learning and walking Torah, we participated in and visited multiple home fellowships and small congregations or synagogues. We've participated in and even spoken at conferences, both in the US and in Israel. We have helped lead a couple ministries that connect with people across the planet. Everywhere, and I mean *everywhere*, single women outnumber men. Within the Hebrew roots/Messianic circles the ratio by my observation is closer to 3:1! Godly single women decidedly outnumber Godly single men. In fact, as I sit here, I can reel off the names of 12-15 single ladies that I know from 32 – 70 without even hesitating. I can only think of about three single men over the age of 28.

A friend in India recently sent a picture of his congregation. It was beautiful as 100 or 150 sat in chairs and on the floor for worship and instruction. Then I noticed that, like a Jewish synagogue, the men and the women were seated separately. Easily, there were three times as many females as males. Easily. In India.

A good friend of mine recently recounted the heartbreaking story of a dear single lady he knew. He said,

*My friend, a woman who had longed to get married all her life, was once given a word of comfort from the Church.*

*She was told that the reason she was still single, well into her fifties, was because her future husband's current wife hadn't died yet.*

*Cold comfort for a woman who has now passed.*

~a friend

Several weeks ago, my wife and I sat at dinner with a recent acquaintance, a happily married man with wife and children that he adores. He sat across the table from us and with tears in his eyes and a tremble in his voice, he recounted four or five single Godly ladies that have come through their lives in the last several years who could not find a husband. One has since left the faith altogether, two married or got into destructive relationships with unbelieving men and one, after earnestly seeking and praying for a husband for eight years, had given up and was distancing herself from God and the church. He detailed that her trajectory was exactly following the others who had left the faith.

Are we so calloused that we do not hear the cries of our sisters?

I am not alone in recognizing this 3:1 ratio. Clyde Pilkington, Jr. details this very obvious and disparate ratio in his well researched book, *[The Great Omission](#)*. He articulates the Church's blindness and often willful silence on a matter that is deeply hurtful and damaging, not just to the single ladies, but to society as a whole. He also reveals solutions from Scripture. Solutions the church has willfully and knowingly omitted and suppressed.

While we are not losing men to the Nile, we are losing them to Pharaoh, the adversary. Culture, the world, homosexuality, drugs, prison, as well as just deadbeats and ungodliness has seriously depleted the ranks of available Godly men.

So, when the Israelite boys were being thrown into the Nile, what happened to all the girls in the growing male:female ratio imbalance? Were they wringing their hands and weeping over inability to fulfill God-given desires and mandate? Were they allowed to leave the tribe and hunt for men among the Egyptians? Did they live as spinstresses?

NO!! They were married! To Israelite men! *There is no other Biblical solution.* We know that Israel continued to grow in number and multiply greatly.



Obviously, this challenges our western cultural paradigm, but Hebrews 11 bestows high praise on many men, 'approved by God,' who fulfilled their responsibility to provide covering for more than one woman. Consider Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon

and David. Others that Scripture proves to be righteous are Caleb and Joash.

Clearly, this is not isolated to one passage of Scripture or a select class of men. Go read Numbers 31 and pay very close attention to vss. 18, 35, 40 and 46... Do a little simple math.

Are we so calloused that we refuse to hear the cries of our sisters? Are we more concerned with tradition or what others think of us than we are with Biblical truth? Are we more concerned with appearance and public relations than our own hurting family? Are we more wrapped up in selfishness than self sacrifice?

Indeed! Where have all the good men gone?

For more challenging study on this topic, [go here](#).

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Numbers 31, indeed, tells us of some good men! Warriors! Godly men who, when called up, answered the call of battle and defended the Name of YHVH against the Midianites.

**Numbers 31** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Take full vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered to your people." <sup>3</sup> Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the Lord's vengeance on Midian. <sup>4</sup> A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war." <sup>5</sup> So there were furnished from the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. <sup>6</sup> Moses sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the war, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war with them, and the holy vessels and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. <sup>7</sup> So they made war against Midian, just as the Lord had commanded Moses, and they killed every male. <sup>8</sup> They killed the kings of Midian along with the *rest of* their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. <sup>9</sup> The sons of Israel captured the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods they plundered.

Men are designed and created to bring dominion to the created order and to bring justice and mercy. Psalm 149 is running through my head!! I recommend it!

Men carry the seed, therefore, Moshe ordered all the *men* of Midian be killed. The laws of warfare, given in Deuteronomy 20, support the reservation of the women (v.14), however Moshe is shocked and dismayed that the Midianite women were saved because they led Israel into the sin of Peor. He commands that every woman who has known a man intimately be killed along with all of the male children.

**Numbers 31:**<sup>14</sup> Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. <sup>15</sup> And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? <sup>16</sup> Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor,



so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately. <sup>18</sup> But all the girls who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves.

The girls who had *not* known a man intimately were reserved ‘for yourselves.’ These were classified as ‘war brides’ with specific Torah guidelines found in Deuteronomy 21:10-14.

We must note, from Numbers 31, two very important factors. First, *NO* Israelite warrior died in the battle. 12,000 warriors in hand-to-hand combat and *not a single one was lost*. This can only point to their actions and walk as utterly blessed and righteous. Second, the captured women who had never known a man, numbered 32,000, half of which (16,000) went to the 12,000 warriors as ‘booty.’ (I’ll refrain from ‘booty’ jokes about war brides... ;) )

What is significant is that God rewards these righteous warriors with the ability to ‘build their houses.’ These young women would become part of the warriors’ families and bear future Israelite offspring.

Polygyny, a man having more than one woman, has been addressed multiple times in our commentary and is clearly affirmed by God as righteous when conducted within the guidelines *HE* set in the Torah. Consider the righteous examples of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Caleb, etc. Further, recall many related Torah commands such as Exodus 21:10-11 and Deuteronomy 21:15-17. God *never* regulates a sin. Simply, polygyny is a natural subset of patriarchy and headship. Women are valuable assets to the man that help him build his house, both materially and physically. They, in the fulfilling of the dominion mandate, provide labor and fruitfulness.

A final note regarding masculinity, headship, and patriarchy from this portion is the actions and attitudes of the men of Reuben and Gad on behalf of the whole of Israel and in protection of their own families. I love this passage wherein the men pledge to fulfill duty to their brothers of the other tribes, while also ensuring the protection and provision of their own families.

**Numbers 32:**<sup>16</sup> Then they came near to him and said, “We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones; <sup>17</sup> but we ourselves will be armed ready *to go* before the sons of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. <sup>18</sup> We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance. <sup>19</sup> For we will not have an inheritance with

them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east.”

<sup>20</sup> So Moses said to them, “If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, <sup>21</sup> and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven His enemies out from before Him, <sup>22</sup> and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you shall return and be free of obligation toward the Lord and toward Israel, and this land shall be yours for a possession before the Lord.

The exchange goes on and Moshe is careful to ensure their allegiance to Israel and not to themselves, however, the above passage gives the gist of the conversation. It is a beautiful thing to see the men of Gad and Reuben caring for brothers and for their families. I would that the men of the Hebrew roots/Messianic fellowships and congregations would be so willing to stand together and ensure the provision, security, and protection of one and all within the House of Jacob.

Selah!!

Shabbat Shalom!