

## **The Betrothal**

Once there was a great king who married a young slave girl and he loved her. It was not long, however, until he found that she was unfaithful to him, and that she took many lovers. Finally, he gave her a certificate of divorce and sent her out of his kingdom. And yet this king never ceased to love his one and only wife for he had given her his whole heart. Always he longed for her and waited for the day that she would return to him. The slave girl continued to take lovers and soon forgot that she had been married to the great king and that it was he alone who had truly loved her. Meanwhile, even though the king knew that under the laws of his land he would never be able to take her back, he continued to provide for her in ways that she never understood. He never forgot the wife of his youth and never married again.

The story has a parallel that is beyond the human realm. For the king is YHWH and the slave girl is Israel. Thus far the story is the same. YHWH has sworn unconditionally that He will never cease to love Israel and to this day Israel will not acknowledge her only Husband. In the spiritual realm, however, YHWH has made the redemption of Israel possible through His Son Yeshua. For in Yeshua's death the certificate of divorce has been cancelled and Israel's sins forever wiped clean. What could never be altered in the human realm, YHWH has made possible in the spiritual. The Great King and His beloved wife can be reunited forever. In Yeshua Israel has been restored to her first and only Husband.

My friends, the story is really an end-time message, for it is in the latter days that Israel will be restored. As my letters continue to emphasize, it is in our time that YHWH is beginning to call Israel back to Himself. By Israel I mean the ten northern tribes that YHWH sowed among all the nations of the earth....the actual literal descendants of our father Abraham. Judah too is being restored to YHWH through Yeshua and the two "houses" will be reunited into one kingdom. But it is to Israel that the prophetic word is most directed because it is Israel (the ten tribes) that most typify YHWH's unfaithful wife. Truly most Mennonites today refuse to believe that they are Israel and to come out of the Babylonian religious system, or that YHWH's commandments are for them and that they need to be cleansed from their impurity. Yet this is precisely the end-time message, that Israel is going to be restored to YHWH or Yeshua as a pure virgin. That Husband-wife, YHWH-Israel relationship is nothing less than the coming of the kingdom of heaven to this earth. YHWH's faithfulness, power and glory will be demonstrated before all the nations by Israel's return to her Husband.

The human story has great meaning and strength. I trust that we can identify with the husband who has lost the wife of his youth through her unfaithfulness. All his days he longs for her return because he had loved her with his whole heart. She is all that he desires so great is his love for her. He weeps often about those days gone by. He is deeply anguished and would even give up his own life just to make her happy again. He dreams that at least at the end of his

life she would be restored to him and they would know again the love that they once had. Her return would be happiness beyond happiness. He would have his life again with her.

Israel, this is how our first Husband feels about us. If we could only sense how deeply He longs for our return to Him and the joy that will be His when we do. He desires us with all His being.

Shalom