

# Marrying Your Brother's Widow

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A Man May Marry His Brother's Widow  
(Deuteronomy 25:5)

A Man May Not Marry His Brother's Widow  
(Leviticus 20:21)

As ancient Israel was meant to represent God's kingdom on earth, they were given inheritance to the Promised Land as an everlasting possession. To ensure this ownership for future generations, God established specific laws that would protect the sovereignty of the land from generation to generation. One of these laws guaranteed that land allotted to a family would not be transferred to another.

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her (Dt. 25:5; cf. Mt. 22:23-24; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

When the nations of Israel and Judah were removed from their inheritance due to stubbornness and persistent sin (Jgs. 2:19; Ps. 78:8; 81:12; Hos. 4:16), the laws that God gave them to preserve their property were suspended.

The Lord will bring you (ancient Israel) and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods – wood and stone. <sup>37</sup>And you shall become an astonishment (a thing of horror), a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the Lord will drive you (Dt. 28:36-37; Ed. notes in parentheses).

You (ancient Israel) shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity (Dt. 28:41; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. <sup>44</sup>He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. <sup>45</sup>Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you (Dt. 28:43-45).

And it shall be, that just as the Lord rejoiced over you to do good and multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and **you shall be plucked (torn) from off the land which you go to possess.**

<sup>64</sup>Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known – wood and stone (Dt. 28:63-64; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So today, the modern descendants of ancient Israel are scattered among many nations that do not know who the One True God is, nor His son Jesus Christ, even though some claim they do. Consequently, they observe ancient pagan customs disguised as being of God. These include holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, Easter, Oktoberfest, etc.

Because the modern descendants of Jacob's twelve sons no longer exist as one nation under the leadership of God, the land laws that protected their birthright cannot be applied to them today. However, many prophecies state that Jacob's descendants will have land allocated to them again, and this will occur after Christ's

return. Therefore the land laws, including marriage to a deceased brother's wife, will be applicable again at that time.

I (God) will accept you (descendants of ancient Israel) as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. <sup>42</sup>Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I lifted My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. <sup>43</sup>And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loath (despise) yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. <sup>44</sup>**Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake** (i.e. God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), **not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings**, O house of Israel, says the Lord (Eze. 20:41-44; cf. 36:16-38; 37:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).



**YOU SHALL NOT UNCOVER THE  
NAKEDNESS OF YOUR BROTHER'S WIFE;  
IT IS YOUR BROTHER'S NAKEDNESS.**  
*Leviticus 18:16; emphasis added*

This future gathering of Jacob's descendants should not be confused with the United Nations mandate to re-settle Jews following World War 2. This was a man-made decision without God's authority and as the majority of Jacob's descendants are not Jewish (i.e. from the tribe, or family, of Judah), they will remain scattered among the nations until Christ's return (Isa. 66:15-24).

Finally, the apparent scriptural contradiction in Leviticus 20:21 is totally unrelated to the land

laws mentioned previously in Deuteronomy 25:5. Instead, Leviticus 20:21 is dealing with a brother who has a sexual relationship with his sister-in-law, while his brother is still alive.

If a man lies with his brother's wife, it is an unclean (indecent, impure) thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless (Lev. 20:21; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The general principles associated with various forms of incest are covered in the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus.

None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the Lord (Lev. 18:6ff).

**You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness** (Lev. 18:16; emphasis added).

The laws mentioned in the 18th and 20th chapters of Leviticus were meant to maintain the integrity of the family, while the law in Deuteronomy 25:5 dealt with land retention and management within each family. By correctly understanding the difference there is no contradiction in scripture, except by those who are deceived or wish to discredit Almighty God's word.

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