

*Male and female God created them.*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Then God said,

"Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness;  
and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,  
and over the birds of the air,  
and over the cattle,  
and over all the wild animals of the earth,  
and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created man in his image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them,  
"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;  
and have dominion over the fish of the sea  
and over the birds of the air,  
and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God saw everything that he had made,  
and indeed, it was very good.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Then LORD God said,

"It is not good that the man should be alone;

I will make him a helper as his partner."

So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field  
and every bird of the air,

and brought them to the man to see what he would call them;

and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air,

and to every animal of the field;

but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the LORD GOD caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept;

then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And the rib that the LORD GOD had taken from the man

he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;

this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother

and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

The word of the Lord.

*Isaac loved Rebekah, so he was comforted after his mother's death.*

A reading from the book of Genesis.

Abraham's servant said to Laban, "I bowed my head and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you anything bad or good. Look, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

Rebekah's mother and brother called her, and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

She said, "I will." So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes." Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negev.

Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming.

And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "It is my master." So Rebekah took her veil and covered herself.

And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

The word of the Lord.

*May the LORD of heaven guide and prosper you both this night  
and grant you mercy and peace.*

A reading from the book of Tobit.

Raguel jumped up and kissed Tobias and wept.

He also spoke to him as follows,

“Blessings on you, my child,

son of a good and noble father!

O most miserable of calamities

that such an upright and beneficent man has become blind!”

He then embraced his kinsman, Tobias, and wept.

His wife Edna also wept for him,

and their daughter Sarah likewise wept.

Then Raguel slaughtered a ram from the flock

and received them very warmly.

When they had bathed and washed themselves

and had reclined to dine, Tobias said to Raphael,

"Brother Azariah, ask Raguel to give me my kinswoman Sarah."

But Raguel overheard it and said to the lad,

"Eat and drink, and be merry tonight.

For no one except you, brother,

has the right to marry my daughter Sarah.

Likewise, I am not at liberty to give her

to any other man than yourself

because you are my nearest relative.

But let me explain to you the true situation more fully, my child.

I have given her to seven men of our kinsmen,

and all died on the night when they went in to her.

But now, my child, eat and drink,

and the LORD will act on behalf of you both.”

But Tobias said,

"I will neither eat nor drink anything  
until you settle the things that pertain to me."

So Raguel said: "I will do so.

She is given to you in accordance with the decree in the Book of Moses,  
and it has been decreed from heaven that she be given to you.

Take your kinswoman;

from now on you are her brother and she is your sister.

She is given to you from today and forever.

May the LORD of heaven, my child.

guide and prosper you both this night

and grant you mercy and peace."

Then Raguel summoned his daughter Sarah.

When she came to him

he took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias, saying,

"Take her to be your wife

in accordance with the law and decree written in the book of Moses.

Take her and bring her safely to your father.

And may the God of heaven prosper your journey with his peace."

Then Raguel called her mother

and told her to bring writing material;

and he wrote out a copy of a marriage contract,

to the effect that he gave Sarah to Tobias as wife

according to the decree of the law of Moses.

Then they began to eat and drink.

The word of the Lord.

*Grant that we may grow old together.*

A reading from the book of Tobit.

On their wedding night,

Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah,

"Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our LORD  
that he may grant us mercy and safety."

So, she got up,

and they began to implore that they might be kept safe.

Tobias began by saying,

"Blessed are you, O God of our fathers,  
and blessed is your name in all generations forever.

Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever.

You made Adam

and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support.

From the two of them the human race has sprung.

You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone;  
let us make a helper for him like himself.'

I now am taking this kinswoman of mine,  
not because of lust, but with sincerity.

Grant that she and I may find mercy  
and that we may grow old together."

And they both said, "Amen, Amen."

The word of the Lord.

*A woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

A reading from the book of Proverbs.

A capable wife, who can find her?

She is far more precious than jewels.

The heart of her husband trusts in her,

and he will have no lack of gain.

She does him good, and not harm,

all the days of her life.

She seeks wool and flax,

and works with willing hands.

She puts her hands to the distaff,

and her hands hold the spindle.

She opens her hand to the poor,

and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,

but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,

and let her works praise her in the city gates.

The word of the Lord.

*For love is strong as death.*

A reading from the Song of Songs.

The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes,

leaping upon the mountains,

bounding over the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

Look, there he stands behind our wall,

gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice.

My beloved speaks and says to me:

“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,

in the covert of the cliff,

let me see your face, let me hear your voice;

for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

My beloved is mine and I am his.

“Set me as a seal upon your heart,

as a seal upon your arm;

for love is strong as death,

passion fierce as the grave.

Love’s flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,

neither can floods drown it.”

The word of the Lord.

*Like the sun rising, so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.*

A reading from the book of Sirach.

Blessed is the husband of a good wife;  
the number of his days will be doubled.

A loyal wife brings joy to her husband,  
and he will complete his years in peace.

A good wife is a great blessing;  
she will be granted among the blessings of the man who fears the LORD.

Whether rich or poor, his heart is content,  
and at all times his face is cheerful.

A wife's charm delights her husband,  
and her skill puts flesh on his bones.

A silent wife is a gift from the LORD,  
and nothing is so precious as her self-discipline.

A modest wife adds charm to charm,  
and no scales can weigh the value of her chastity.

Like the sun rising in the heights of the LORD,  
so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.

The word of the Lord.

*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.*

A reading from the book of the Prophet Jeremiah.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD,  
when I will make a new covenant  
with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.  
It will not be like the covenant that I made with their fathers  
when I took them by the hand  
to bring them out of the land of Egypt.  
But this is the covenant  
that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,  
says the LORD:  
I will put my law within them,  
and I will write it on their hearts;  
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.  
No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other,  
“Know the LORD,”  
for they shall all know me,  
from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD.

The word of the Lord.