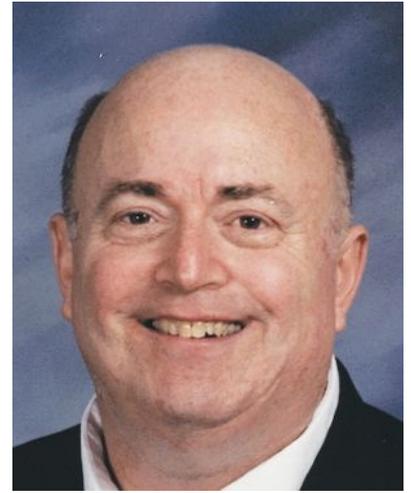


# *The Bride*

## *Channah Bardan*

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Hebrew Catholics walk in Rabbi Yeshua's footsteps. We live our early lives in Judaism. Then we experience a death and resurrection as Catholics.

God's revelations to man, both in the Torah and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, also recapitulate Rabbi Yeshua's journey. In the Torah, Genesis and Exodus are primarily stories of salvation history, while Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are primarily commands for the Temple sacrifices and other laws.

The Jewish synagogue service in our time came from the *shakharit*, the ancient Temple morning service: songs, Scripture readings, and prayers. In the Holy Mass, the first major part, the Liturgy of the Word, is also modeled on the *shakharit*. Its most important part is the Scripture readings, the stories of salvation history. The second major part, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, is entirely devoted to Rabbi Yeshua's sacrifice on the Cross.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Rabbi Yeshua's sacrifice on the Cross are *one single sacrifice*. Rabbi Yeshua began the Passover, his Last Supper, after sundown. He instituted the Holy Eucharist but he did not end the Passover according to the ancient tradition. He sang the *hallel* psalms but did not drink the fourth cup of wine, the *hallel* cup, and did not announce as head of household that the Passover was finished, so his Passover was not finished that night. But on the Cross, at the *end of the same day* in the Hebrew calendar, in the last moments of his mortal life, Rabbi Yeshua took the vinegar (fourth cup of wine), announced, "It is finished," and gave up his spirit Jn 19:30. In this way he made them one single sacrifice. The Passover and the Mass are the crown jewels of *one Faith*.

God alone can give a revelation to an entire nation at once. Consequently, the rabbis have always held that a nation's perspective is true only if its faith has been revealed to the entire nation at once. In all of salvation history that has occurred on only two occasions, through Moses and Rabbi Yeshua. Both revelations have been given to God's people Israel.

The first national revelation, through Moses, is well known. On the sixth day of the Hebrew month of *sivan* in approximately the year 1446 BC the entire Israelite nation stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai. "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled ..." Ex 19:16.

Isaiah had foretold the second part of God's national revelation to the Jewish people. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" Is 40:5. It could not have pointed to the revelation through Moses because Isaiah wrote it about seven centuries after Moses' time, and used the future tense, "shall be revealed." It can point only to God's revelation through Rabbi Yeshua.

The second national revelation, through Rabbi Yeshua, began, in a sense, in 622 BC when King Josiah and his high priest Hilkiah found Moses' long-lost original handwritten Book of Deuteronomy. When they read it, they discovered that Jewish heads of household could no longer make the Passover sacrifice themselves: "You shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go, and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock" Deut 12:5-6. It had been there since Moses first wrote it down by his own hand, but at that time God had not yet revealed where the place for his habitation would be. When it was revealed, the Passover would become a pilgrimage feast. Every Jew, from wherever in the world he lived, would have to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem and bring his lamb to a Temple priest who would sacrifice it for him. In that way the Jewish tradition of the entire nation gathering in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover began.

All the world's Jewish men, with their families, were in Jerusalem on the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of *nisan*, when Rabbi Yeshua was crucified. God again gave an awesome theophany. At the moment of Rabbi Yeshua's final sacrifice on the Cross, the Temple curtain was torn, the earth quaked, the rocks split, the tombs opened, and many bodies in them were raised, Mt 27:51-52. On the road to Emmaus, Cleopas exclaimed to the Risen Rabbi Yeshua, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened there in these days?" Lk 24:18. Even the Jewish authorities who had sought Rabbi Yeshua's crucifixion confirmed that all the world's Jews knew. "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it" Acts 4:16.

God changed the names of Abram Gen 17:5, Sarai Gen 17:15, Jacob Gen 32:28 and Simon Mt 16:18 when their relationship to him changed. And, as he promised Is 62:2, he changed the name of his community of Faith. Some Jews held fast to God's original covenant with Moses, these we call today Jews. Other Jews followed Rabbi Yeshua, these we call today Catholics. Many Gentiles also came into the Catholic Church, but that is a story for another day.

Befitting Rabbi Yeshua's stature as God's *Mashiakh*, he also was given the distinction of having been pre-announced. especially in the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" Is 53:5-6.

There was an even more striking pre-announcement. The Jews standing below the Cross knew God's promise given through Ezekiel six hundred years earlier, "Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people" Ezek 37:12-13. The *Tanakh* translates *veyadatem* Ezek 37:13 emphatically as "And you *shall* know." Rabbi Yeshua fulfilled it. "The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many" Mt 27:51-53.

Rabbi Yeshua's incarnate life hit the earth with such force that he split all history in two. *Every event in the world* is marked by how many years it occurred before or after his arrival. Two thousand years later it is still true.

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And so at last we come to *The Bride*, Channah Bardan's beautiful story of her walk through Judaism and Catholicism: The Sabbath, Marriage, Mass, and the World to Come. Kathleen Moss observes in her preface that Channah Bardan's approach is only one of many possible approaches to Hebrew Catholic life, life lived in fully Catholic belief but in both Hebrew and Catholic traditions."There is room for all people in God's net of love from former atheists to agnostic Jews, from secular to Reform Jews, and from all the varied backgrounds of Jewish people now in the Church or yet to come beyond ability to mention."

We're not reading Channah to find out how to live a Catholic life illuminated by Jewish tradition. We're reading to find out *Channah's way*. It's an excellent gateway, and many people learn better by examples than by templates, but Rabbi Yeshua calls us to different life-experiences and different ways of thinking. Anyone who visits my web site [secondexodus.com](http://secondexodus.com) and Brother Gilbert's [aronbengilad.blogspot.com](http://aronbengilad.blogspot.com) will instantly see Hebrew Catholic life from different perspectives, but we love and learn from one another. His way is better for him. My way is better for me.

In Channah's book, *The Bride*, Kathleen continues, "Where better to start than with the laser-beam holiness and beauty of Orthodox Judaism, culminating in the fullness and grace of authentic Catholicism, where the King of Creation is truly present at the heart of a Jewish family?" Heb 4:12.

*Remember and Observe*, Channah's first chapter, sets the stage. She tells us that in Orthodox and Conservative Judaism, the rabbis understand the Sabbath command to do no work forbids us from doing any work that alters our environment. It doesn't matter whether the work is easy or difficult. Channah says the Sabbath rest reminds us that "we are completely dependent on G-d for everything." Rabbi Yeshua extended it to every day of the week. "Apart from me you can do nothing" Jn 15:5. She reminds us that in the Jewish realm the Sabbath is a total sensory experience. "We cleanse our bodies and dress in good clothes. The table is set with our best china, silver and crystal for each Friday evening meal. Fresh flowers are placed on the table and throughout the house. The smells of food cooking all day Friday make the home a warm inviting place." She adds, "There's always the last minute dash of 'We're not going to make it!' because once the sun is down, Sabbath observance ... starts; no more work can be done." And Channah assures us, "Everything we do in Judaism points unmistakably and directly to the Messiah, Yeshua, Jesus; to the Church and our relationship to Jesus; to the Sacramentality of the Church; and to our lives coming together in the *Ha-Olam Haba*, the world to come." And Channah reminds us, "These are the same prayers the Holy Family would have recited every *Shabbat*. This is exactly what Jesus would have prayed, said, and done ... and much of it was about Him!"

*L'Cha Dodi*, Come, Beloved, refers to the Sabbath, which is likened to a special princess. In the Sabbath, Orthodox Jews enter into a full covenantal relationship with God. As a groom longs for his bride there is also a longing for the promised Messiah. Channah tells us that many of the Sabbath liturgical prayers exult, "Thou hast sanctified the seventh day." In Hebrew, the word *sanctified* is *kiddushin*, which is the same word for marriage. Channah points out that wedding imagery is used throughout the Bible. Several of the patriarchs meet their bride at wells, places of watering and rest. Abraham's servant is sent to find

a bride for Isaac; in the desert he first encounters Rebekah, who offers him water at a well Gen 24:3-54. Moses flees from Egypt for killing an Egyptian. As he walks across the desert he hungers and thirsts for his true identity, who he is as part of God's plan. He sits down at a well in Midian, where he rescues Jethro's seven daughters from rogue shepherds who want to abduct them. Channah observes that in the desert water sustains all life, and that Rabbi Yeshua tells the woman at the well, "Whoever drinks from the water I will give will become a spring of water inside, welling up to eternal life" Jn 4:5-25.

*The Light of Shabbat* invites us to meet the Sabbath Bride. Judaism has only one liturgical role for a woman. The woman of the house, usually the mother, recites the blessing over, and then lights, the two white Sabbath candles, just before the last rays of sunlight fall below the horizon. Then she closes her eyes and circles her hands three times above the two candles, calling the light of the Sabbath into herself. In Judaism, light represents the divine. f"The Lord is my light and my salvation" Ps 27:1. "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." Is 60:1. Rabbi Yeshua continued the theme of light as a representation of the divine presence. "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" Jn 8:12. He passes it to his Apostles, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" Jn 20:21. "You are the light of the world" Mt 5:14. In St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem, "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk" Rev 21:23-24. In this light a husband blesses his wife, "Who can find a good wife? 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 ..." Prov 31. We Hebrew Catholic men can also bless our wives, making the small Sign of the Cross on her forehead, reflecting God's love of the family. It is especially powerful when the husband blesses his wife as she is preparing to pass into the life to come. And yes, cradle Catholic men can, too. "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, and is himself its Savior" Eph 5:23. And the Catholic Church is the "new Israel" CCC 877.

*Kiddush - Sanctification* in the Sabbath liturgy comes during the Friday night home service. The father elevates the silver cup of crimson wine and sings the blessing in Hebrew. This is the *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine. When the cup is lifted the physical is symbolically elevated to the spiritual. Channah tells us that there is no change in the *physical* form of the wine. When a priest at the altar consecrates Christ's Body and Blood we say there is a *sacramental* change. A physical change would replace the bread and wine with only Christ's human nature, his Body and Blood. A sacramental change adds also his divine nature, his Soul and Divinity. When the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century defined the meaning of the Eucharist, it declared that "the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ, is truly, really, and substantially, contained in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist." *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "This same Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ are sacramentally present in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine" CCC p. 868. Today when we say "Body and Blood" we mean his divine and human natures bound together in one hypostatic union, but with the confusion in our time we had best make sure everyone knows why we speak of *sacramental* transubstantiation.

*Purification* for marriage in the Orthodox Jewish tradition begins with a ritual bath called a *mikveh*. Both the bride and groom take it at different times. It is a full immersion of the body into flowing water. Three times the person goes under while prescribed prayers are recited in the presence of a synagogue official of the same sex. Compare it with the first Catholic sacrament, baptism. "The entire Christian life bears

the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the people of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist" CCC 1617. The purification ritual is timeless. Channah tells us that the priests in Solomon's Temple consecrated themselves for their Temple duties by cleansing their hands in water. It is a spiritual cleansing, soap is not used. Even today in Jerusalem there are water fountains for washing hands before entry into the Western Wall area. Jews wash their hands before eating. In fact, Channah tells us that in Israel all the restaurants have hand washing stations in the front. The family table thereby becomes a type of "altar" that takes on a higher spiritual meaning. In Catholic parish churches, before the priest can consecrate the bread and wine to become Rabbi Yeshua's Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, he first washes his hands while quietly praying, "Lord, wash me of my iniquity, cleanse me of my sin."

*Challah* is the Sabbath bread that reminds us of the manna. There are always two *challot*, reminding us that, on the day before the Sabbath, God gave a double portion of the manna so that his people Israel did not have to bend down and pick it up on the Sabbath day. Channah tells us that each *challah* loaf emerges from the oven as a beautifully braided three-fold cord. Each *challah* loaf is visible as three distinct loops that form one entire loaf. After the bread is cut the loops cannot be distinguished from one another, reminding us that Jews pray the *Shma* prayer three times a day, and each time in three distinct phrases: "Hear O Israel," "The Lord our God," "the Lord is one." Moreover, the *Shma* prayer, literally translated into English, is "Hear O Israel, my Lords, our Gods, my Lords, one." There are three separate mentions of God, each in its plural form, followed by the word *ekhad*, a compound "one." One four-leaf clover would be *ekhad* because it consists of four leaves. Hebrew also has a word, *yakhid*, formed by keeping the root but changing the vowels, that means an absolute unity. So the *Shma*, the pre-eminent Jewish prayer, found in the *Torah* itself Deut 6:4, vividly points to God as a triunity. We Catholics understand that God has always been a family of three divine persons in one Holy Trinity, one spiritual substance. However, our Lord had to teach his Israelite family that he was different from the idols that all over the world apart from Israel believed were gods. Teaching them that he was three divine persons would have confused his chosen people into thinking, "three gods," which was not true. So he wrote a prayer that before Jesus came would say only "the Lord is one," but after Rabbi Yeshua would be visible as one God in three divine persons.

Channah's experience of the *Shabbat* morning services was particularly personal. She was raised in an Orthodox family. Orthodox Jews seat the men and women separately, as they believe women in a congregation often distract the men who are trying to stay focused on their *davening*. Channah wanted to be a *bat mitzvah*, which an Orthodox *shul* would not accept for a woman, so in her pre-teen years she persuaded her family to move from their Orthodox *shul* to a Reform temple. She tells us that the Reform temple seated men and women together as families, had an organist and a choir with church robes. All the prayers were the same, and in the same order, as in the Orthodox *shul*, but English translation was used much more extensively. Along her road to the Catholic Church, Channah spent some time in a Messianic Jewish congregation. There she encountered a perspective that Rabbi Yeshua is the Living Word, so when the Ark is opened and the Torah comes out, in a sense, Emmanuel is among us. It is not a sacramental presence, but it is certainly a spiritual presence.

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Some readers may wonder whether I'm giving you all the highlights of Channah's *The Bride* so you don't need to buy the book. It is exactly the opposite. A published author myself, I'm careful about copyrights. My purpose here is to whet your appetite. After an introduction to the Hebrew Catholic perspective, I've given several of Channah's insights but intentionally left out some in each chapter. I've entirely left out the last three chapters, and also Channah's afterword, "Escorting the Queen," that together form *The Bride's* climax, hoping readers will say, "I want more of this."