# Betrothal Testimony of



03/31/2024 True View Theater Ava, MO

#### Introduction

Betrothal is like an engagement, but more binding. It has a Ketubah, which is the marriage covenant. It can only be broken by a bill of divorcement. Similar to courtship, betrothal is chaperoned. The couple is never left alone or allowed to go off privately together. Each family gets acquainted and most interaction is done in a family setting. This way, it's much easier to get to know the true colors of each individual. You can't hide behind anything when you're with your family.

Even though Ricky and I are mature, we chose to purse our relationship unto marriage through betrothal. Here is the story leading up to the day of our betrothal.

# My Account

What came as a sudden announcement to many was really a sudden development for Ricky and I (Saige/Sonyah). What had started as covolunteering at the Bread of Life Thrift and Grocery store back in September of 2023, developed first into a strong friendship and then into a spiritual brother sister relationship. Ricky was nothing more than a brother to me, and my best friend. We worked well together and had a great time.

He helped me learn to laugh again and not take life so seriously. My spiritual dad (Noah Smith) passed away on 02/02/2023. I was a consistent caregiver for him and I missed our daily conversations and time together. In the few months that followed, I allowed myself to get lost in the shuffle of life. I let myself go and was determined to make it through life alone - independent as possible. It wasn't easy, but I was stubborn enough to persist.

Changes occurred within the Bread of Life Ministry and I took up the slack by volunteering full-time at the thrift store in June 2023. It brought back some stability and routine to my life. As I overhauled the

store's different displays, I learned that we would be moving into a larger location. July would begin that endeavor. It would take a few weeks just to move everything. By August 2023 we were opened at the new location and I volunteered to manage the store. I was willing to be there six days a week. It was a mountainous endeavor to undertake.

Slowly, the thrift side of the store took shape. With the dedicated volunteers who helped when they could - I am very grateful for your time - with the clothing department, along with the other departments, everything started to look organized. The last department to be put together would be the Crafts/Sewing Department with all its little details.

Although I was the manager (by default, no one else asked to take it on), I felt inadequate in many ways. Sure I could manage the other store fine by myself, but this one was three times larger. There was a lot more to manage, plus learning new systems and overseeing more volunteers. Late August, on an early Thursday morning, I remember walking down the men's clothing aisle to the back of the store, praying to Yahweh for help. It wasn't just any help I asked for, I needed someone who knew the business side of things.

### Answered Prayer

The next morning, a petite woman arrived. Kelly drove down from Massachusetts, stopping only to fuel up. She was coming to get baptized. She had come by faith. Almost immediately we hit it off and I learned that she was an answer to my prayer. Having owned her own business, she was very well acquainted with the business side of things. For the next few weeks, she tutored me in business management, hands-on. I learned how to deal with people, organize without feeling overwhelmed, and take breaks for myself.

Since Kelly was staying at Tom and Ariana's house for a few weeks, we walked up the driveway (only 4-wheel and all-wheel drive vehicles can handle driving it) and then rode together to the thrift store. As sis-

ters, we spent almost all of our time together, praying with and for each other, sharing each other's testimony and dreams. I would be a first-hand witness of how Yahweh works in our lives to bring to pass His desire for us. Yahweh brought her and her husband together in a very unique and timely way.

Time goes by as it tends to do and it was nearing the time that she would soon move on, though we didn't grow distant with each other. Instead we grew closer and continued to develop our sisterhood. It was the last week of August as we walked down the driveway after volunteering at the thrift store. This was our regular routine. She would drive us to the top of the driveway while we talked non-stop all the way from the store. The car would be parked and then we'd continue our conversation down the driveway. That day, she knew that she would be married soon and in her delight, she prayed for me. She prayed that Yahweh would release a husband for me. I remained quiet in the prayer. I wanted to share in her joy, but at this point in my life, I really didn't see it happening. Kelly was determine that Yahweh was going to do great things in my life. I would have to rely on her faith because I had grown content to remain single for the rest of my life.

## Meeting Ricky

Almost literally a few days later, it would be here at the new location that Yahweh started to prepare me for the next phase of my life. Unknown to me at the time, He brought along my husband. I had no idea. It would be August 31st, a Thursday, that Ricky showed up at the thrift store, humbly asking if he could do anything here. He wouldn't be able to do much, though.

I don't like to turn away help, so I found something for him to do. We were using a new sales point system and we had to create labels for things. Each item was given a UPC (barcode) with a designated price. We accumulated more tags than items and they needed to be organized

in a system that we could retrieve later for future donated items. The pile had grown over the weeks and it was too overwhelming for me to sit down and sort them. So I gave them to Ricky. We were starting to put together a price book also. He got the job. For two hours, he struggled through the mess. To me, it was a relief that someone else would handle it. He left for the day, promising to return again.

He did. The next day he persisted with the stickers. I noticed he had a strong determination to do something. It reminded me of my spiritual dad, Noah, who persisted to be useful even though he couldn't do much with the vertigo and the seizures that spontaneously interrupted his life. Yet Noah was determined to do something. That impacted me. It influenced me to persist in my projects because giving up wasn't the answer.

With each passing day, Kelly, Ricky and I spent a lot of time together, becoming a team of three. We worked the store, took breaks, and had a good time talking when things were slow. Kelly helped with the cash register. Ricky began helping with pricing items. Eventually, Kelly moved on but remained a strong friend with us.

The days unfolded in September and Ricky began to do just a little more. He would stay longer and help out where he could before he had to sit down. For the days that my ride was later than usual, he insisted on staying until the ride arrived. He didn't like the idea that I was left alone in the store. I didn't think it was a problem. Life had taught me to be independent, but I appreciated his concern. At first, it felt weird that some guy was worried about me being left alone. I had grown accustomed to fending for myself. For most of my life, that was the norm.

#### Sukkot

Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) soon arrived and we closed the store for a few weeks. By now, I considered Ricky to be like an older brother (I never really had one) we kidded around and yet, when I needed advice or help, he was right there for me. I liked having an older brother who let me be me. We had a brother-sister contract that I made. It was simple and went like this...

Clause #1. Little Sister is always right.

Clause #2. If Little Sister is wrong, please see clause #1.

It was meant for fun, and a way to let off steam in a friendly way. Since I considered him to be my older brother, he became family. I started to look out for him, make sure he was taken care of, and find people to help him out. He didn't really know anyone at Sukkot, and he couldn't get around much. Being in a constant state of pain, he had limitations, but he persisted where he could. He also dealt with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) being a military veteran and had to stay away from busy environments. Yet, several times, he worked to overcome it to participate in group activities and fellowship with others.

I was also busy with my team organizing and helping with the different events. Back in August, I requested to organize the women's meeting during Sukkot. I didn't want to just step in and assume I would do it, so I sent a request to the head Elder. It would be less than 24 hours before I learned that I had the position. Knowing that I couldn't do it myself, I scrambled to find a team of women who would help me. Six of us agreed to put something together in less than six weeks.

We did just that. We put together a tea party and launched a women's ministry, Daughters Of Light (DOL). We had a tea party theme, refreshments, door prizes, speakers, and different areas for women who wanted to listen to the speakers, have private conversations, or socialize without being a distraction. The Daughters Of Light team also took on a few other projects and we busily oversaw them throughout the week.

During Sukkot, three different women approached me about marriage. Each one of them asked me if I had met my husband yet. None of them really associate with each other, so I didn't think it was planned, but it felt strange. Why were they asking me this?

## The Remaining Of 2023

Soon it was all over and we cleaned up and headed back to our lives. Much of it was a great success and the DOL team started a newsletter which soon turned into a magazine. (Click <a href="here">here</a> for the DOL Facebook page; go to "Files" for magazine access.) October, November, and December continued without incident. Ricky and I continued to volunteer at the thrift store. He helped where he could and rested when he had to stop. He began praying for the store and spiritually covering it in Yah's protection.

I learned a lot about his past in those three months. That man had been through a lot. He had faced some deep challenges and yet Yahweh always seemed to draw him out. I had a deep respect for my older brother. Even with all the challenges, traumas, and struggles he had been through, he was still forging forward, much slower now, but still moving. I could see many similarities between him and my spiritual dad. They both were firstborns, which gave them the driving advantage of moving forward in spite of obstacles. Both were strong prayer warriors, constantly in communion with the Father. Both men were in a constant state of pain. Both had a sense of humor, even the Dad-jokes were somewhat funny.

Winter was easier to deal with this time around because I wasn't trying to make it through on my own. My older brother and I could talk and work and laugh and meet the needs of the customers while building each other up in Yahshua. By this time, I had a deep appreciation for him as my brother. Little did I know, that life was about to take a different turn. Yahweh had plans and He was going to reveal them to us.

### The Beginning

January. What a month. Each time I share how Yahweh approached me about Ricky, I can see how stubborn I was against the most High. He was gentle with me. One sister, Renee, after listening to me said something that caught my attention.

"Do you have any hip problems?" She interjected.

"I wasn't wrestling with Him! I was arguing with Him!"

"What's the difference?"

I thought arguing wasn't as intense. Plus, I relented after four times He approached me. I wanted to be sure. Really sure. So here we are, up to the moments when the lights were being shined on Ricky and I by Yahweh most High. This is where we begin our story together.

This was not our idea. It was Yahweh's. We were best friends when Yahweh started working on our hearts. Both of us (separately) rejected the idea at first because we were eternal brother and sister.

# Rícky's Testimony

Shalom.

The journey begins simply enough. I was researching the proper way to say the Savior's Hebrew Name. Having exhausted all the books I owned, I began researching online. I was drawn to a research engine called EliYah.com. Upon investigation, it appears that it is a gathering of "Hebrew Roots" believers. In order to get a feel for their trustworthiness I began watching their Sabbath services. Embarrassingly the first two times I watched it, I fell asleep. The righteous teacher's voice has a no-thrills, straight forward style of teaching. Extremely relaxing, thus sleep set in!

The third time I watched I was prepared, coffee and herbal energy supplements kept me bright eyed and alert. About thirty minutes into the message I began to cry like a child lost in a huge department store. You see for about 46 years I had been looking for my Heavenly Family members. Well the spirit of YAH (Heavenly Father) impressed on me "That I had found my Family!"

## A Trip To Ava

This broadcast has a "chat room." I had mentioned I would love to get baptized in my Savior's Hebrew Name. Next thing I knew, an Elder was contacting me about coming clear from Alabama to Oklahoma City to pick me up and drive me to Ava, Missouri, to get immersed and take me home again. My health was not good. I was on oxygen and narcotic pain pills for extreme pain, due to spine injuries!

Fast forward.

Some months later, by a love and tender mercy that can only come from Yahweh, Eliyah Ministries moved me from Oklahoma to Ava, Missouri. I was simply almost bed ridden, although my precious heart is the Savior's heart, it's a heart of service to my fellow man!

#### Outreach In Ava

One day I got on my electric wheelchair and went to one of the outreaches here for YAH, "Bread of Life Thrift and Grocery Store." This is where I met Sonyah Smith. She literally made a job for me to be able to volunteer! Praise Yahweh I could seriously serve again. At first it was extremely difficult and all I was doing was putting stickers in a book.

## Volunteering With Sonyah

Sonyah's Yahushua-like spirit was like healing to my bones and a gentle salve to my heart. She had just lost her spiritual daddy (earlier that year) and was attempting to overcome her grief and pain. I guess in many ways I reminded her of her dad and we became close friends.

She realized I wasn't a taker, but in Yahushua ha Mashiach (the Savior) I was a giver. Her trust in me grew and she adopted me as her older brother. Many were the tests she put me through, unknown to me, but apparently I passed them all and she adopted me.

Please forgive me while I speak as a fool, but it is necessary to allow you to understand our current situation and relationship! I am sold out for YAH! My days begin with thanksgiving to Him and end the same way. Every day begins with prayers and fellowship with my best friends Yahushua and Yahweh!

#### Yahweh's Intervention

One morning in December, while in prayer for Sonyah and others of my family, I began having witnessed emotions for Sonyah greater than a "brother and sister relationship."

Instantly I cried out to Yahweh and Yahshua to take from me these feelings because "she's my sister! Yahweh help me!" I cried.

I was totally confused and startled about this because I felt that I was a eunuch for Yahweh. Unapproachable, unavailable. For heaven's sake, I was a cripple on oxygen, in need of a wheelchair to get around. Yahweh Himself moved upon me and began actually, factually slapping down every excuse I would present to Him!!!

Finally He impressed in my heart/soul that I am working towards helping Sonyah with the outreach to help the women's ministries. That "together" we are commanded to lay down our lives and be poured out like a drink offering in service to the Daughters of YAH, seekers of the Narrow Way! Blessed be the Qodesh/Kodesh (Holy) Name of YAH!!!!!!!

Shalom your servant Ricky Jenkins Doulōs (Slave) to the House of YAH seeker of the Orech ha Tsar/Thlibo Hodos (Narrow Way)

#### Rícky's Emails

It would be mid-February when Ricky sent emails to a group of counselors to inform what Yahweh had brought to his attention. To him, it was a "future discussion of great importance."

Opening with great consideration, he wrote, "May Yahweh bless us with wisdom, insight and eternal understanding! May we put a smile on the face of Yahshua ha Mashiach and Yahweh our Master and eternal King!"

He requested a group chat to share it. "As a Veteran and follower of Yahshua ha Mashiach I believe in doing all things properly and in an orderly fashion. Having said this I pray that Yahweh bless us lead us and guide us into eternity with and in His Shem!!!!!!! Your servant Ricky Jenkins Doulōs to the House of YAH seeker of the Orech ha Tsar."

Wanting to make sure that there were no misunderstandings with this great undertaking, Ricky also specified,

If indeed you would like the events that lead me to the decision to ask to be Saige's eternal covering please permit me to speak with you, rather than try to write them down. In writing I just can't guarantee that the sequence, order and details will be exactly correct. I am a stickler for truth!!!!!!!

Writing isn't easy for me!

Talking is better and please forgive me but texting is so easily misunderstood, especially since you know so little about me. Please do me this kindness and allow me to talk not text. May Yahweh bless us and permit us to shine forth His loving kindness and tender mercies!

He had a witness (the third witness is a mutual eternal brother) but wanted to secure permission before sharing his name. Ricky also made himself available for any questions that the group of counselors would have. They would need time to discuss and evaluate from their perspective. (I [Sonyah] requested this extra step before making anything public.)

## Verification For Sonyah

I also shared an email with the group of counselors pointing what I saw as verifications from Yahweh. This is what I wrote:

The Ruach [Spirit] has been prodding my heart last month (January) about the possibility of pursuing a relationship with Ricky to the marriage altar.

It began with a simple prayer, asking for a life's mate that wouldn't just "get the girl and run", but that he would be someone that would be committed to ministry here at the thrift store. I have poured my life into this ministry (Bread of Life and Eliyah) and I didn't want to be uprooted. I wanted to work alongside someone who would be just as committed to Yahweh to be stationary. Too many men say the right things until they get the girl and then they take off with all sorts of excuses. Did Yahweh have a man who would pour his heart into the ministry?

When He brought up Ricky as a possibility, I shut it down. I refused to consider it. As far as I was concerned, Ricky's my older eternal brother and not a candidate for *that*.

A few days would pass and then the Ruach impressed on my heart again, would I consider Ricky? No, I wouldn't as I "shut the door" on Yahweh's fingers.

Again a few days would pass by and then as I communed with Yahshua on a walk, the idea came forward again. Would I considered Ricky as a possible choice? And my answer was no, I don't think I can do that.

The fourth time occurred the week of January 28th.

On another walk with Yahshua, the heart conversation began with the possibility of Ricky being my husband. This time I responded to Yahshua that if Ricky were to be my covering, that he would need to get off the oxygen, be free of back pain and arthritis and be able to function completely independent of his wheelchair. He also needed to have a passion for personal development (i.e. building character, taking care of the temple of Yah, health).

I also asked Yahweh that if this is from Him, that He would give three independent witnesses.

Two sisters texted me on Shabbat (02-17-2024).

Here are the conversations...

(Renee) Hey Sister, Shalom to you! I have to talk to you. I have something to say to you. I have felt for AWHILE NOW that I believe that Yah wanted me to tell you that the man that sits behind you is YOUR HUSBAND. I've known for a while now...several months actually but I want to be obedient and tell you. ... Love you. Seek Yahweh...and ask if this be true and test the spirit. Amein.

\*\*\*

Melissa - Shabbat Shalom! This has been in my thoughts ever since I saw you yesterday, so I'm going to ask. Have you thought about Bro Ricky as a potential husband? Is that a possibility? It appears that you two have a bond that is special.

Sonyah - Shabbat Shalom. Thank you for sharing your thoughts. That is a possibility that will be brought up to the elders.

Melissa - That makes my heart happy. Remember our conversations from Sukkot?

Sonyah - Uh huh.

\*\*\*

The conversation at Sukkot was that she felt I was going to meet my husband there. (Email end.)

It was February 13, 2024, when it became a reality for me to consider, but I wanted to be absolutely sure by submitting the idea to the group of counselors. It would be four days later (2-27-24) when the two sisters texted me of their own volition. Neither of them know each other.

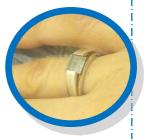
# Special Elements To The Betrothal

Yahweh writes each of our stories and every time He brings a couple together, there are unique characteristics and elements to the occasion. Here are some of those elements that He penned into our lives.

#### The Ring

The original ring I wore was a gift from Noah and Hadassah, given to me at Sukkot in 2022, in Arkansas. It was a reminder that Yahweh has one for me, His best for my life. Eventually the gems fell out and I ended up having to take it off.

In December 2023, Yah blessed me with another ring to remind me of His promise. It had one blue gem. I wore it on my right ring finger without much thought.



The Sabbath before the betrothal (March 30, 2024), a mutual friend stopped Ricky and gave him a ring to give me. It came with this testimony: (Written by: Kaleah Gonne)

Two years ago in the first month of 2022, I was drawn to a ring as I was shopping for an engagement ring with one of my children. It did not fit myself nor my soon to be Daughter in Love. I felt drawn to it unnaturally. We left the store and returned a few days later this ring was now on the



sale counter, I again felt the "need" to purchase this unnecessary ring. I called my husband for permission/acceptance to purchase. He asked a few questions on size, fit, and if they could resize it. Though there was a possibility to resize, it was never my desire to send it off to do so. Nor a desire to wear it.

The news came a few weeks ago that dear friends we have been praying that Yahweh join together are going to be betrothed.

Sabbath morning as we prepare to stay in Ava for the ceremony on first day and Yahweh brings to my mind to fetch that ring, as His daughter is ready to receive the ring He has prepared for her.

As Yah would have me to speak with Brother Ricky to ask their intention on wearing a symbol of their union, it was affirmed that he would like to give a symbol to his beloved. As I handed the ring to him, he looked at the size and was pretty sure it would fit Yahsomely.

I am blessed to have been the hands used in preparation of a gift from Yahweh!

Ricky asked me to wear the ring on my right finger, since in Scrip-

ture, the "right" is usually associated with blessing. The ring is a perfect fit.

#### Paul: The One Who Betrothed Us

Ricky requested that Paul be the one who betrothed us. He held a special place in Ricky's heart. Paul Lowery came from his home state (East Central Alabama) to bring Ricky (living in Oklahoma) to Ava to be baptized. There were serious health risks involved, but the Elder didn't think twice about it.

As one of three Elders with Eliyah Ministries and Shepherd's Way Fellowship and also a board member of Bread of Life, Giving and Sharing (True Brew, True View, and the thrift and grocery store), Paul is actively involved in the chat room with the Sabbath broadcast. That's where he "met" Ricky in 2023. In his own words,

He was always one of the first one's if not "THE" first one in the chat room. He would share how things were going and would ask for prayer for things he was having to endure such as the pain in his back and neck and having to be on oxygen 24/7 due to his lung issues. He shared also that he was a veteran who served in the navy, but what really spoke to my heart was when he talked about getting immersed and nobody around to do it and how being in Torah for seven years he had never been to a Feast. It sounded like a distress call to me.

So, I made it a point to contact Brother Ricky. We talked a few times about getting him to Ava for the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost). It just so happened that the Elders were planning an Elders meeting during Shavuot 2023 and once everything was coordinated I let Brother Ricky know that I would be coming to Oklahoma City to pick him up and take him to Ava.

At first he was very happy and excited about it, but as the

time drew closer for me to pick him up there was some apprehension on Brother Ricky's part. There were some concerns about his oxygen machine and his ability to get around. My only response was to trust in Yahweh. I picked my brother up and took him to Ava where he observed the Feast of Shavuot and was immersed that same day.

The two eternal brothers bonded.

The news of Ricky and I pursuing a relationship to marriage was not something he expected, however, it settled in his heart when he visited Ava for Passover/Unleavened Bread 2024. The two brothers discussed Ricky's steady health improvement and financial matters. He also had the opportunity to observe Ricky in daily life.

When questioned about his reaction, Paul shared,

Surprised, Concerned, Joy, in that order lol. Surprised because I just didn't expect it. Concerned about Brother Ricky's health and how he would provide for Sonyah. Joy...seeing the two together before and after the betrothal, how they both come together in prayer always acknowledging Yahweh as their Elohim and Yahushua as Yahweh's Messiah and their Saviour leads me to this. Psalm 16:11, "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

I made a trip to Ava for Passover/Unleavened Bread 2024 and we talked about those two things extensively and after seeing Brother Ricky and how he came off his oxygen and was able to walk to the theater for sabbath fellowship without any problems was a total surprise, and we explored different avenues to better provide for Sonyah which took my concerns away.

Paul had already met and interacted with me in the context of the Household of Faith (Noah, Hadassah, Ariana and myself) at Sukkot

(Feast of Tabernacles) 2020. He requested that the three of us meet during the week of the feast to discuss options from the VA (Veterans Association).

Ricky asked Paul to do the betrothal. At first, he was speechless. He had never done one before! He felt both humbled and honored. With help from Father Yahweh and the Savior Yahshua, along with some help from his eternal brother Tom, Paul would in a matter of days put together his presentation.

I asked Paul what advice he had for Ricky and I as we pursued a life together. His response was simple, but deep. He simply gave <u>Matthew 22:37-40</u>. Yahushua replied, "Love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments".

And then he added, "Also this, don't ever forget the day when you both realized when Yahweh brought you together."

Obedience like Miriam (Yahshua's mother), Faith like Ruth, Courage like Esther, Wisdom like Deborah, Humility like Miriam of Magdala

For with Obedience comes sacrifice,
With Faith comes belief,
With Courage comes strength,
With Wisdom comes understanding,
And with Humility comes honor.

These are the characteristics of a Proverbs 31 woman.

(Impressed with his answer, I asked another question. What would be his advice to our readers? This was the answer...)











## The Huppah

My desire for the Huppah (Canopy) was simple. I wanted something portable, lightweight, collapsible, but decent. I liked the canopy tents I have seen at outdoor farmers markets. When I mentioned it to Melissa (eternal little sister and close friend), she had one available for the short notice.

It didn't take long for the men (John and Ricky) to put it up.

Then Melissa, her niece and I decorated it. Angie, another



close friend, helped with the finishing touches. My spiritual mom (Hadassah) encouraged me over the years to collect the decorations for "that day."











#### The Vision Board

I am thankful for my spiritual parents for their training over the years. Noah and Hadassah taught all of their children (including me, their spiritual daughter at age 20) to live a life by faith. I can attest that my faith has been tried in the area of a life's mate for over two decades.

In 1998, I gave my heart to my spiritual dad to protect it for the day that he would give it to my husband. We had no idea that he would pass away before then (02/02/2023).

Yahweh used Mom to encourage my faith along the way. She would give me small gifts throughout the years. Some bought and some were handmade to remind me that Yahweh has a mate for me. One of those gifts, cross-stitched by hand, hung on the front of the huppah. Mom encouraged me to collect decorations, flatware, etc. over the years. In 2020, she asked if I would do a vision board as part of her presentation at the women's meeting during Sukkot. I agreed.

It was a good refresher because as the years passed, I just figured that Yahweh passed me by and I would have to get along as a single woman. I dived into that concept, reminding myself that Yahweh had different plans for me. It wasn't easy to swallow, but by the time I entered my forties, I had a strong determination that life as a single woman was the best deal and I would make the most of it.

As I put the vision board together, it refreshed a dream I had let slip by. Although I was content to remain single, I kept an open mind in case Yahweh changed His, but I didn't have high hopes any more.

Mom wanted a small presentation with the vision board. It really summed up my life in a very concise way. She used it again the following year. This is what I wrote for Sukkot 2021:

How is it that I am 46 and still waiting for Yahweh's best? Well, at 20, I dedicated my life to full-time ministry, brushing marriage aside. My twenties were filled with spiritual growth, out reach, and constant change.

My thirties were invested in personal development, healing from the past hurts and practicing total forgiveness and unconditional love.

By the time I reached my forties, my goal focused for the decade was to empower others. The marriage concept revisited me at 40, when I considered it again as a viable option. Over the next six years, slowly and deliberately, I jotted notes of what I desired in my life-mate.

Have I waited too long? NO! I serve Yahweh, the Almighty of impossibilities, and it will come to pass. I will be married to Yahweh's best for my life. And while I wait, Yahweh faithfully trains me to be a virtuous wife and a righteous mother.

What you see on the vision board comes from those six years. The words written in marker are prayers for him.

The different pictures represent different desires.

Top left: dog - accepts dogs.

Top center: glasses - transparency.

Top right: apples - fruit of the Spirit.

Center left: workshop - organized; ice cream - enjoys life's simplicities.

Center: paint with paintbrush: Yahweh is decorating our lives.

Bottom left: yellow chair - one-on-one.

Bottom right: corner sofa - hospitality.

I had no idea that only a few years later - in Yahweh's timing - I would be staring in the face a dream I let float away.



# The Betrothal Diary

**Monday, March 25, 2024**. Passover night for the sighted moon calendar. I am riding home with Tom and Ariana. It's late, about 10 p.m. Casually, our conversation takes a turn as I learn that there is a betrothal in the works for Ricky and I.

**Tuesday March 26, 2024**. Unleavened Bread Day 1 for the sighted moon calendar (High Day). It's early (6:43 am) when I receive a message from Ricky. Elder Paul shared that he spoke with Tom and wanted us betrothed before he leaves! (He's planning on leaving the following Tuesday.) Apparently Paul had talked to Elder Neil and Neil suggested that he betroth us while he was there. Ricky knew I didn't like to be surprised on short notice, as he put it "blind-sided". For a moment, I'm speechless. Sitting on my couch, I'm stunned. Now?!

I lean back in my seat and quickly do the math. Today is the high day for the sighted moon, (Day 1 of Unleavened Bread). Tonight begins Passover for the Dead Sea Scrolls calendar (DSS) while tomorrow is the high day (Day 1), plus, there's an activity that day for the feast (sighted moon) hosted by Eliyah ministries. Thursday is way too soon. Friday is Preparation Day; then there's Sabbath. Sunday might work. Paul leaves Tuesday, but Monday is the high day (sighted moon). That leaves Sunday as the best day for everyone. And that leaves about 4 days of planning (including today, excluding Sabbath).

Wow. That's not a lot of time. I seriously thought I had a couple of months. Thankfully, Yah has provided most of the decoration. A huge thanks to my spiritual mom, Hadassah, who encouraged me to build a hope chest over the years; she reminded me that my husband would come in Yahweh's timing. (Thank you Mom!) Yahweh also reminded me of two super-fantastic friends who would step in to help. And He also blessed me with wonderful sisters-in-Torah who helped with the refreshments! I would reach out to them in a couple of hours with the recent developments.

Ricky and I "text-talk" about the Ketubah, Huppah and wardrobe. The Ketubah is the marriage covenant. Betrothal is more binding than an engagement. It can only be broken by a bill of divorcement. For the Huppah (canopy), I desired a simple Huppah that we could put up and take down easily, something portable and collapsible. Our outfits would be something out of our own wardrobes. We still need to decide on a



location.

The outfits are chosen. My navy headscarf was a gift given to me by a close friend. She had seen it online and ordered it, but when it came in, she didn't like it, so into a drawer it went...until this weekend (when she gave it to me). She didn't know what I was going to wear, but it matched!

Ricky would wear his bibs (overalls). His reasons are: (1) no frills; (2) it would be in honor of a fellow and dear brother who Yahweh used to bring him back to life. The (now deceased) brother was a Seventh Day Adventist. And Ricky added in his message, "Reminds me that I did nothing to earn you but that Yahweh has been motivating us and YAH did all the work!" He also wore 100% cotton button-up shirt purchased from the thrift

store.

Paul wants to meet with the two of us to discuss a few details regarding our future together. We agree that Thursday is best for that.

Even though it's a cold day, we enjoyed it in fellowship with our close friends at Shepherd's Way. However, I cannot shake feeling cold....

**Wednesday, March 27, 2024**. I'm off to a good start. I've managed to shake feeling cold with a hot shower, hot tea and bundling up in warm pajamas and my favorite housecoat. With a good sleep behind me, I feel much better.

The team of wonderful sisters have been informed and almost immediately a refreshment menu is put together. Other guests are invited and asked to bring either refreshments, drinks, or disposable flatware/dinnerware.

Ricky shared with me Paul's suggestion of having the betrothal at the theater (True View). It would certainly simplify things and also bless the body of "Shepherd's Way" and viewers around the world. There are many people who watch Eliyah Ministries, but they are alone with no fellowship. Ricky felt that having the betrothal filmed would be a way to include them in the special occasion.

They had a good point there. Originally, I wanted to have a private betrothal. My reasoning was that I'm closing 50 (less than 2 years) and I'm too old to have a fancy betrothal with lots of people. I wanted just a minimal amount of guests, something simple. I wasn't into announcing my life-mile-markers to everyone I saw, met, or knew. I didn't care to be that kind of celebrity. What about those people who would be able to attend online? Was I being selfish, trying to keep everything private?

We talked it over throughout the day and I relented to filming it. That also took care of the location from outside to indoors. The betrothal would unfold on the stage of True View theater in Ava, Missouri. That would help with announcing and inviting out-of-state guests. Having our betrothal on video would make it easier for those who wanted to attend but couldn't see it live. It also allowed viewing on demand without time restraints. Both Ricky and I prayed and dedicated our betrothal to Yahweh, that He would use it to be a testimony and a blessing to those who watched it.

We are still working on the Ketubah. Ricky has his commitment completed. I am at a loss at how to write mine. We asked Joshua (eternal

little brother) to design it for us and he agreed. He needs the finished product by Friday morning to get it printed. Oh boy. There is a picture I liked that I think we can work with.

Next came the invitation and guest list. The invitation was easy enough for those local, though it would be limited to our contact lists.

Ricky Jenkins & Saige (Sonyah) Smith are blessed to invite you to attend their betrothal.

Date: 03/31/2024 -01 (first day of the week)

Time: 11:00 am

Location: True View Theater

It will also be live streamed via Eliyah Ministries.

(For the local guests...) Please respond to this text if you would like to attend in person. Thank you.

For those that did, I sent a follow-up text...

Would you be able to bring refreshments or a drink? We are currently celebrating the feast of Unleavened Bread, so any refreshments will also need to be unleavened.

Of course, we didn't have the link yet, but as soon as it was available, it was sent out to the online guests. As for the guest list, we went through our contact lists and sent it out. Those who lived close to us and interacted with us on a regular basis had an idea that something was going on. They were pleasantly surprised with the announcement. However, it came as a shock to most.

That evening, I'm sorting through emails and feeling a sore throat beginning to develop. I can't get sick. Not now. I start drinking more water, tea, and taking vitamin C. I feel dragged down and tired, but I'm

going fight it all the way. Now is NOT a good time to get sick. It's 10:45 p.m. and I'm in bed. Sleep is one of the best medicines I have.

**Thursday, March 28, 2024**. I wake up with sneezing and a stuffy nose. I guess I didn't get rid of that feeling cold problem after all. I double up on water, teas, vitamin C and some herbs to fight it. I can't slow down now.

I'm still sending out texts. I'm inviting people and awaiting their responses. Some respond immediately with congratulations and they want to come. Others congratulate and decline. To keep track of everyone and everything I've put together a spreadsheet of guests, those attending in person, those attending online, what refreshments we will have, which guests declined, who gets a link, etc. It's easier than scrolling through all the texts. I also start sending out online invitations with the notation that a link will follow.

Shortly after, a few people had already declined, some positive and some not-so-positive. A few never answered. Everyone gets a link, just the same. The questions start flooding in. Some never ask questions. I feel so odd for not being inclusive and yet, for myself, even 2 months ago, Ricky was just my big brother and best friend. I didn't even consider him to be a possibility for marriage.

Today I head over to Ricky's where Paul is staying. We are discussing several issues before the betrothal. I bring my Heart Covenant that I committed to Noah Smith (1949-2023). My heart was kept safe from the time that I entrusted my spiritual dad Noah with it. From 1999-2023 he had been true to keeping my heart safe for Yahweh's best for my life. When he passed away, the heart covenant was fulfilled between us. There were no clauses written about what would happen after one of the parties passed away.

\*\*\*

It was late spring when I felt impressed on my heart that I needed to dedicate my Heart Covenant to Yahweh and to start preparing for it. I didn't think it was necessary or important (because I really didn't see it

happening in my life and being single was just fine with me), so I delayed preparing my heart for it. I finally decided to follow through, on the account of Kelly (my answer to prayer for help in managing the thrift store).

I shared with her some of my idiocrasies about delaying Yahweh's instructions. Her answer didn't surprise me, but it was a good reminder how I was delaying my own progress. Yahweh rarely gives us the whole picture with all the steps. Usually, He gives us the instructions on a need-to-know basis. As we obey and complete it, we "check it off" the list. Then He brings to our attention the next set of instructions.

Friday, September 8, 2023, I finished up what Yahweh required of me. Saturday, September 9, 2023, I dedicated my Heart Covenant to Him. And in a matter of days Yahweh moved her on.

On my 48th birthday (09/09/2023), I dressed in white and took the Heart Covenant up to a quiet place in the pasture (where I'm living in the countryside). I knelt down and placed it on the ground in front of me. I prayed to Yahweh and dedicated my heart covenant to Him. I would now trust Him to bring His best to me, if that was what He had planned for my life.

\*\*\*

I would be spending the day with Paul and Ricky. I bring my laptop and my Heart Covenant. We discuss the several issues and a few extra, such as, the importance of honoring parents. I left home at 20, turning my back on everything, family, friends, hobbies, and potential-career choices. I wanted to do things the Father's way. In leaving, I left a huge tear in the family fabric. It has never truly healed. Time has only covered a festered wound. Each time I "appear" in their lives, I can feel the tension, resentment, and even tolerance-covering-hostility. Although my biological mother and I reconciled a year before she passed away from chemotherapy complications the rest of my family has remained separate from my life. I had no intentions of telling them I was getting

married. I considered telling them after the fact.

When Paul listened to my testimony, he shared of his own with his father. We adult children can still honor our parents through communication. I cringed at the thought of having to communicate. I didn't like the idea of sharing my life with a family who blamed me for the injustices in their lives. I didn't care to open up any door for communication. Yet, I saw what Paul was putting across. In the bigger picture, I was not honoring my dad in any way by shutting him out of my life. Instead, I was making the choice for him, trying to justify it because he and I didn't see things eye-to-eye. That was no excuse. It was true that I didn't honor him because we didn't communicate...at all. It would be up to me to break that silence. It was time to let him make the choice if he wanted to still be a part of my life.

Reaching him would be easy through my sister. Emailing was the option. When I left Ricky's house that day, I felt in my heart that our broken relationship would not mend over an announcement, but the Spirit prompted me that it could be an open door towards reconciliation. It's not up to me to fix the problems, that's Yahweh's job; my part is to be willing to follow His instructions.

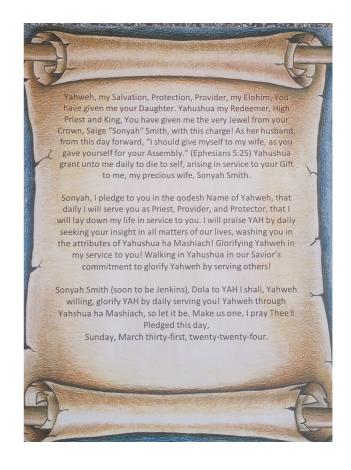
**Friday, March 29, 2024**. **3:41 am.** It's not that I'm procrastinating on my commitment for the Ketubah, I just need to spend some time on it. And since I've got all this adrenaline flowing through my system, being awake this early in the morning is a good time to finalize my part on the marriage covenant.

A few days ago, Tom had advised us both to not use the word "vow." Vows are taken incredibly serious in Scripture. When we utter that word, the Accuser goes out of his way to make sure we mess up and not keep the vow because he knows that punishment must follow. To avoid that, use other words.

Ricky had already written his commitment and submitted it. I wanted mine to be simple but special, easy to remember, but deep and meaningful. I had a list of things I wanted to include, yet I couldn't seem to put it together in a presentation that I liked.

As I repeatedly drafted it, Yah's Spirit impresses on my heart about a song that I wrote years ago. The melody was simple and the chorus easily changed.

I remember that song, "Truly I Want To Be". It was February 14th, 2014 and we (the Household of Faith: Noah, Hadassah, Ariana, and me) were living in SW Florida. The melody came while I rode my electric bike to town. I felt elated that morning, almost floating as I remembered the dream...



In the dream a large commercial plane flew over the Atlantic and landed in northern Europe. We (the Household of Faith) got off the plane and were invited to stay at an elaborate castle. We were there for a week. At the end of the week there was a celebration party. Many people were there, all dressed up. Yahshua was there also. We sat at a round table covered with a white table cloth. Yahshua came over and asked me to dance with him. Not wanting to be self-centered, I turned to my spiritual mom (Hadassah) and asked her if she would like to dance with him first.

She answered sharply, "No, I don't! I'm already married!"

So I got up and danced with him. I remember feeling elated, overjoyed, ecstatic to be there with him. The evening went on as we danced.

The next scene I remember was Yahshua standing at his bedroom window. The plane was being loaded with the guests leaving. He had proposed to me, but gave me the freedom to choose. I could choose to leave with my family and return home or I could choose to stay with him. He didn't show his face to avoid influencing my decision. He watched from his window, and I could feeling his longing to see me again, but his discipline to wait.

I remember walking down the corridor, all beautiful stonework. I stopped at his room, the massive wooden door before me. I knocked and waited. He opened the door wide, so that it touched the wall. He stood patiently and waited for my response. I gave my answer by stepping towards him and as he embraced me, I said, "I want to stay with you." I closed my eyes and soaked in Yahshua's love for me. In his embrace was where I awoke from the dream. The feeling, though, stayed with me. ...

A couple of hours later as I rode along the highway and almost without traffic, I still felt that feeling from my dream...elated, overjoyed, ecstatic, loved. In the silence a melody came forth with words..."Truly I want to be with You, Truly I want to be near You, Truly I want to be at Your side, Yahshua. Truly I want to be with You, Truly I want to be near You, Truly I want to be at Your side." Later that day, I wrote the words down and penciled in the music notes. I wrote the song with the dream in mind. It was beautiful to me, but I never had the desire to develop it further. Occasionally I would visit the song and sing it.

I recalled the feelings that came with it, so, when Yah's Spirit impressed me to use the song for my commitment, I had to smile. How fitting! It would be easy to remember ... I had already memorized the melody years ago. Changing the words to my commitment was easy too. The poetry flowed well. Scripture supported each line. I liked it. Yahweh's idea worked...as always.

My commitment was finalized just hours before the deadline. I wrote a clean copy on special paper to use for the betrothal, and I did the same for Ricky, his request also. I typed the two commitments and emailed them to Joshua, along with the announcement of the marriage

covenant.



All three of us worked on finalizing the Ketubah that afternoon. I am thankful for Joshua's gift in graphic design and ability to put ideas together quickly. They leave to get it printed and I'm headed to the cafe to work on Sabbath Prep.

I'm in the process of trying to explain myself with the sudden announcement. I suppose this is where my intentions of having a private betrothal backfired on me. I had to explain to some shocked invited guests that this wasn't a spontaneous event, that there had been development for some time,

but it was not by our hand. Yahweh had His signature all over this relationship. It was His idea, not ours. This was all new to them and they're stunned that they're only hearing of it now.... One of the struggles I have has resurfaced. Yahweh is teaching me to yield to Him in this area of my life. Will I continue to be "private" about my life or will I yield to Him and allow Him to use my vulnerabilities to minister to others?

I have never liked being vulnerable. For most of my life vulnerability ranks with weakness, however, I noticed that most people who are reaching out to help others share their own vulnerabilities without reserve. It shocked me how they could freely expose their own struggles and weaknesses, how they overcame, and how they learned to teach that victorious strategy to others. I felt my vulnerabilities were too personal to share. Besides, who could I possibly help, anyways? Father Yah did not relent. He continuously brought these people across my path to prepare for the day when I too would see the value and strength

in being vulnerable....

Back in February, Ricky had made a change in his Facebook profile to "engaged." We had agreed that a relationship is possible. Ricky felt very sure that that was the day that the relationship began. However, I felt that there needed to be more verification that this was from Yahweh before sharing with others. I had decided on the 13th that I would agree to pursuing the relationship AFTER we present it to a group of counselors. When they approved it, it would be a sure sign - to me - that this was a total go-ahead. I felt like I was skidding my shoes on the sidewalk, but I wanted to be absolutely positive that Yahweh was going to checkmark this no matter what. If it was from Him, we would get the go-ahead. If it was us then it would be turned down. I know that looking back it looks like I didn't have much faith to step forward, but at the time, I was holding back on purpose, waiting for Yah to approve each step of the way. With that last "checkmark" I would be ready to make it public.

Eventually, we all make it back to Tom and Ariana's for Erev Shabbat. Wow! What a day! I'll be packing tonight to stay at the theater.

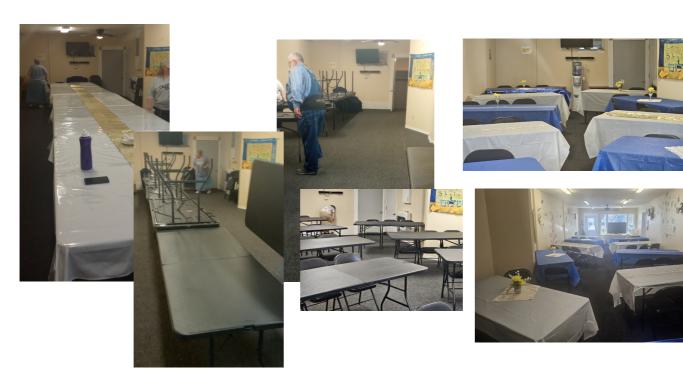
**Saturday, March 30, 2024**. Sneezing, coughing, and blowing my nose this morning. I have to remember the licorice tincture to bring with me. It stops the cough in its tracks.

Shabbat Shalom! It's a regular Sabbath day. We're up and off to the theater to set up. The Broadcast goes from 11 am - 3 pm. It starts off with Tom's Introduction; Neil's sermonette; songs from the library, then Tom's teaching. While more songs play, the local fellowship (Shepherd's Way) has a pot-blessed luncheon. Questions And Answers Session with Tom follows, with prayer requests and prayer time. The final farewell and then it's fellowship time with the local assembly, questions and answers, Bible studies or singing with the guitar accompaniment.

Today Tom announces betrothal at Questions And Answers Section. Tonight, when the sun goes down, we will set up the Huppah for the betrothal and the reception room for refreshments. With a dedicated team, we tear apart the fellowship room (where we eat), clean it up, wipe it down and set it up differently, accommodating for at least 30 guests. Some guests have already canceled last-minute; they have the link to watch.

I stay at the theater tonight to get up early tomorrow. Confetti is at home this time. Usually I bring her so that I'm not totally alone there, but this time, I don't want the extra distractions with everything I've got to do. Also, I make up a list of all the last-minute details and guestimate how long they will take. This finalizes how early I must get up in the morning.

The sun sets and we get to work. We all tear into the fellowship room, dismantling everything and moving it out for the thorough vacuuming, wiping it down. Tables and chairs are moved back in on angles with chairs facing the large picture window. The betrothal table is set up at the front. There is a guest book to sign and a bench with some chairs for guests to sit while they visit. Plastic tablecloths, blue, white and yellow are set out. Simple center pieces decorate them. The water dispenser and drinks will be set up at the back. The refreshments are outside the fellowship room in the front foyer of the Theater. Everything looks good. With that out of the way, the men set up the Huppah while



us women finish the final touches.

Then it's time to dress up the Huppah. Melissa, her niece, and I get ready. I pull out the tote of ready decorations and bring down the pre-



stairs. We use twine to string up the sheers and clip them in place to prevent them from drooping. Safety pins help the sheers to fill in the gaps. In less than an hour, the Huppah is done, except for the final touches. One of them being lights and the other a precious work of cross-stitch that I saved for years. It was embroidered by my spiritual mom (Hadassah Smith) as a reminder to me of waiting for Yahweh's best for my life. She made it several years ago. I had put it

down somewhere and I couldn't remember where! It was driving me to distraction! Such a simple piece, how could I lose it now?! I prayed to Yahweh to reveal its whereabouts and the only answer I got was water.







Water?! I need to drink water?! I had to go to bed that night without finding it.

Eventually everyone departs and I'm at the theater, retiring upstairs on the couch. My list is ready. Figuring it out, I need to get up around 4:30 am.

**Sunday, March 31, 2024**. I'm awake at 4:20 a.m. I spend the quiet time with Yahweh first and by 5:00 a.m., I am ready to start my day with my To-Do List. However, today I am coughing up infection. Ricky has said many times that black coffee helps with congestion. So (since he's up in the wee hours of the morning anyways), I text him with the request to bring some strong (black) coffee.

Today the betrothal happens. In one sense, I'm glad that I organized most of it because it helped me stay level-headed. I wanted to remember every detail of it and I did by being a central part of putting it together. It was never done single-handedly. So many people were involved, even if a lot of them haven't been an active part in my life for some time.

If it wasn't for my spiritual mom Hadassah, encouraging me to start collecting years ago to save items for this day, I wouldn't have had the decorations for the Huppah and table centers for the refreshments. If I hadn't helped to prepare and attended two of my spiritual sisters' betrothals (Monique and Ariana) I wouldn't have had any idea how to prepare for mine. If I hadn't invested time in others' lives - because I was too busy with my own - I wouldn't have experienced the joy of friendship/sisterhood with this special occasion. Yahweh proved to me in the last five days that we never achieve in life alone; there is always someone else who is helping us out. I am grateful for that.

I start with a quick retracing of my steps for the cross-stitch and come up empty-handed. I have a lot to do so I move on for now. To keep track of my time, I check my list every time I complete a task. Some items are still left in the theater foyer for me to put away, including the water dispenser. When I return from the circuit of visiting the thrift

store and cafe (from a shower), I start to clean up those items. That's when I find the cross-stitch, sitting on the top of the water dispenser.

Last minute details are finalized and the cross-stitch is put in its place, the Huppah is now complete.

We start a quick rehearsal at 10 a.m. as some guests arrive early. Wow. A lot has happened in the last five days. I'm grateful for the flexibility and pro-active diligence of everyone involved with the plan-



ning and set-up. It's true, the adage that says, *Team work makes the dream work!* 

To view the betrothal, go to <a href="https://eliyah.com/jenkins">https://eliyah.com/jenkins</a>

P.S. Being a senior dog who had special needs, Snowball attends my betrothal also.



#### A Friend's Testimony

I have witnessed the amazing works of our Heavenly Father. I have seen it in my own life how He matches us up with the one He approves to be our other half. For you see, I'm not at all surprised by the union of you two. Our Heavenly Father works in His amazing ways. I remember when I first came to Missouri not knowing anyone but I was led here by Him not knowing that I was going to meet the man who is now my husband the next day after going to Missouri and revealing to us individually that we were each other's half. So before my husband even saw my face he knew I was his wife, and then I knew he was my husband. This was while neither of us revealed it to each other. It's truly amazing.

Many of us are stuck in the worldly mentality of dating: the boyfriend-girlfriend and "oh you have to first give yourself time to know the person". This is a worldly habit from years of being boyfriend and girlfriend, but there is no such custom in the ways of our people.

Oh, how wonderful it is to know that he is the one for me as I know I'm the one for him. There's such peace of mind. So you see, when you know it's from the Father there is no need for "I need to give time to get to know him first." WHAT is that about? It's different. Those who have received the message within themselves individually from those who are not sure if he or she is the one. No one should say well it's too soon or so on. Our Heavenly Father Yah approved it. There is no more to be said.

My husband and I have witnessed how our Heavenly Father brought you two together. Amazing. I remember a few times when we saw both of you working at the thrift store, my husband would say, "Ricky and Saige would make a good couple." We could see you guys simply flow with each other. It was one of my prayers for you, Saige, as you witnessed how the Father worked in my life in surprising me with my husband. I prayed for Father to release your husband and bring him to you, and you were there when I prayed this out loud during our sister talks. And wow, He did! **HalleluYah!** 

I love you both. Congratulations!!

## Wedding Announcement & Registry

The wedding is set for September 17th, 2024. It will take place at Indian Springs Campground in Steelville, Missouri, before Sukkot begins. It is our hope to film the wedding also.

We both agreed that we would like to dedicate the first week of our marriage to serve Yah's people. We chose to forego a honeymoon.

If you would like to give a wedding gift, you are welcomed to view the <u>Amazon Wedding Registry</u>. (Or paste this into the search bar of your browser,

https://www.amazon.com/wedding/registry/2PCW5A54G4C6O.)

Or, if you desire to give a monetary gift, please send to @slavetogospel at PayPal.com

#### In Closing

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this. I am grateful to Yahweh for Eliyah Ministries, True View Theater, and Shepherd's Way for the use of their facilities and equipment. Thank you, all my dear sisters, brothers, and friends for your help and contribution.

Father, bless everyone who reads this account and watches the betrothal. Use our story to for Your purposes in Yahshua's name I pray.

Not unto us, O Yah,
Not unto us,
But unto Your name
Give honor,
For Your mercy
And for your truth's sake.
(Psalm 115:1)