



Preparing the Bride: Blows that Hurt Cleanse Evil from the Heart

(Proverbs 20:30)

By Barbara L. Klika, MSW

Undershepherd

Set Apart Ministries, Inc.

December 2013

***Blows that hurt cleanse away evil,
As do stripes the inner depths of the heart. NKJV***

In recent weeks several verses and concepts have been brought to my attention during my study and prayer time, this one prominent among them. A study on pride I recently came across and our theme of Psalm 51 for Sukkoth all seem to have come together for me. It is not that this understanding is new yet it confirms from another direction what we have understood about how our Great Shepherd is emptying us...so that He can fill us. It caused me to reflect on its application in our day, on the type of evil that is found in the heart, and its relevance to the Preparation of the Bride of Messiah. It does seem especially important for under-shepherds, or anyone in a mentoring role, to be aware of this process so that we can be encouraged and bring encouragement to those who are in it. It is a picture that gives another dimension to the concept of the two sides of His work among us:

- discipline or distancing Himself while also drawing us near;
- judging what is not of Him while nurturing what He imparts;
- the same judgment that pained the Egyptians brought redemption to His people;
- the chastening that one who is loved receives.

The Bride is most certainly not exempt from His ways, and in fact, is more deeply involved. I will offer the background study and a few of the pictures I found in this piece, and hopefully, expand on a few more later that came to light as I was preparing this much.

Background Study

To begin exploration I checked several translations and found these variations. Though I appreciate the NKJV for my personal reading, I use other versions for deeper study and ease of connection with additional resources.

The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly. KJV

Blows and wounds scrub away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being. NIV

Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts. ESV

Blows that wound purge away evil, yes, beatings [cleanse] one's inmost being. CJB

The Good News Bible, which was put out by the American Bible society in 1976 as a modern language translation seems to do a straightforward interpretation of the verse:

*Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.*¹

This instruction from Proverbs may well be used as a support reference for corporeal punishment. The metaphor has additional levels of meaning. The wounds or blows of the first part of the verse are parallel in meaning to the stripes of the second part which will be addressed later. This parallel structure is very commonly used for emphasis. The second part may either simply confirm the first or add additional insight and word pictures.

Matthew Henry notes the importance of severity of punishment because there are some children and some criminals with whom gentle methods will not work. He noted that the "wise God sees that his own children sometimes need very sharp afflictions."² He refers to Hebrews 12:11 for support of this view.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

This seems very relevant to us here at Set Apart Ministries since Hebrews 10:32-39 is our mission statement, and includes exhortation to endure affliction with your companions because of the reward that is to come. I also see a connection with the name we were given and our desire to be a part of Messiah's Bride.

Adam Clarke has a similar interpretation, referring to the meaning of the Hebrew word under "blueness".

*Does it not refer to the cicatrice³ of a wound when, in its healing, the two lips are brought together? By this union the wound is healed; and by the previous discharge the lace-rated ends of fibres and blood-vessels are purged away. So stripes, though they hurt for the time, become the means of correcting and discharging the moral evil of the inmost soul, the vice of the heart, the easily-besetting sin.*⁴

I would have thought that "blueness" as in the KJV referred to bruising as I saw the metaphor. Further word study shows that indeed, it includes bruise along with stripe, wound and blow.

¹ <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Good-News-Translation-GNT-Bible/>

² Matthew Henry Commentary as provided by Blue Letter Bible; www.Blueletterbible.org

³ Cicatrice: **Physiology** . new tissue that forms over a wound and later contracts into a scar. **Botany** . a scar left by a fallen leaf, seed, etc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cicatrice>

⁴ Adam Clarke commentary <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/cmt/clarke/pro020.htm>

חַבְּוּרָה *chabbuwrah* *blueness*: Strong's # H2250 Blue Letter Bible (BLB) further adds Gesenius's Lexicon which defines the primitive root being 2266 *chabar* as meaning *To unite, join, bind together, be joined, be coupled, be in league, heap up, have fellowship with, be compact, be a charmer.* ⁵ This didn't initially seem related to me since a bruise would not necessarily be an open wound that needs to be brought together to close.

TWOT lists this word under 598g and has nearly an identical list of meaning. However, as I looked at all of the words in this group, I saw that only two of them, g and h, related to strike or blow while all the rest focus on the various concepts of joining or alliance, for good or ill. It is the same word used to refer to the joining of the curtains in the Tabernacle and the shoulders of the ephod. In Ugaritic this word is used for "community" related to the common Semitic word meaning "to be joined" and translated as "bind" in Assyrian. There are other variations used to refer to consort, companion, knit together and grandson. It is also noted that the name of Hebron for a city may be related to this concept. ⁶ This, too, seems deeply connected with our calling here at Set Apart Ministries and recognition of the importance of community as we mature in Messiah.

The Ugaritic use of this word for community and the Semitic use of it for "to be joined" both do seem to confirm the bond of two that can indeed bring pain and sharpening. I will draw from an earlier study on the implications of this kind of joining and sharpening.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17 KJV

Iron: In this context, this word is Strong's #1270 from #1269 root word.

The transliteration of this Hebrew word is "*barzel*". In the ancient Hebrew its consonants are *bet, resch, mattock* or *vav, lamed*. It refers to "iron as cutting, by extention an iron implement as (ax) head, iron." The probable root word is the feminine plural from an unused root, "to pierce". "Iron head" is the same word with two Strong's numbers: 1270 & 6523. Pictographically, it means something along the lines of "the head of the home/tent sharpens and guides."

TWOT noted that the word "iron" could also be used in reference to affliction, slavery, barrenness, and obstinacy.⁷ "Sharpen" is Strong's #2300, *hadad*, which is said to be a primitive root meaning to

⁵ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *chabar* (Strong's 2266)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 1 Dec 2013. < [http:// www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2266& amp;t=KJV](http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2266&t=KJV) >

⁶ Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament: Harris, Archer, Waltke, Moody Publishers, 1980.

⁷ Theological Wordbook Of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer, Waltke, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 1980. pages 130-1.

be (cause, make) sharp, or figuratively (severe) be fierce, sharpen. This word correlates to TWOT's # 605 which again confirms nothing more than the idea of making something sharp. Taking the Strong's # 2300 over to the Ancient Hebrew Lexicon, we find that it correlates to # 1165B(v) which confirms what we have already seen. The ancient Hebrew root consonants are a het and dalet, which depict a tent wall and a door, speaking of "unity." A wall separates what is inside from what is outside. It is noted that "only through a door can one enter or exit, uniting the inside with the outside."

"B", a het and two dalets, indicates the meaning to be "sharp"—the two edges of a sword that meet to form a point. The verb usage again confirms, 'sharpen, pierce.' "Two or more coming together as a unity, the sharp edge of a blade is the coming together of the two to one point."⁸

John Gill's commentary on this verse is also inclusive of the bond between physical beating and reclamation and reformation.

*Rubs it off and scours it away, ...or is a clearing and rubbing it off; some men must be beaten black and blue, or must have very sore correction, before they can be reclaimed and reformed from their evil ways;*⁹

Henry, Clarke, and Gill all concur on the connection between physical beating and correction of behavior, in those situations in which the consequences of poor behavior must be severe enough to merit future reconsideration whether the action was worthwhile. They also had another note:

*sanctified afflictions to God's people are the means of purging away their iniquities, their dross, and their sin; ... by means of corrections and chastisement men are brought to an inward sense of sin; they are shown their transgressions wherein they have exceeded, and are commanded to return from iniquity, ([Job 36:9](#) [Job 36:10](#)); they lament and mourn over sin, confess it and forsake it; and then may the inwards of the heart, the mind and conscience, defiled with them, be said to be cleansed from them;*¹⁰

*2. Severe rebukes sometimes do a great deal of good, as corrosives contribute to the cure of a wound, eating out the proud flesh. The rod drives out even that foolishness which was bound up in the heart, and cleanses away the evil there. 3. Frequently those that most need severe rebukes can worse bear them. Such is the corruption of nature that men are as loth to be rebuked sharply for their sins as to be beaten till their bones ache. Correction is grievous to him that forsakes the way, and yet it is good for him, [Heb. 12:11](#).*¹¹

⁸ Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible, Benner, Jeff A.; VBW Publishing, 2005; page 118.

⁹ [Our Library Commentaries John Gill's Exposition of the Bible Proverbs Proverbs 20](#) Proverbs 20:30

¹⁰ Gill, *ibid*.

¹¹ Henry, *ibid*.

*So stripes, though they hurt for the time, become the means of correcting and discharging the moral evil of the inmost soul, the vice of the heart, the easily-besetting sin.*¹²

Examination of the pictographic meanings of the word brings a little more clarity for me as to why “joining” and “bruising” would be so closely related.

2143) **חֲבִירָה** (חבר HhBR) ac: **Couple** co: **Clamp** ab: **Companion**: The binding together as being coupled. [from: **חָבַר** - as being enclose] ... **דָּפַח** (דפורד Hh-BW-RH) - **Bruise**: Striped bruises made by ropes binding the wrist or lashes with a rope. [freq. 7] |kiv: stripe, hurt, wound, bruise| {str: 2250}¹³

The second part of the verse, referring to “stripes” is very similar to this information on bruise or wounds as is written below.

The next phrase, “of a wound” in the KJV is pretty straightforward, with the same meaning, specifically of there “being a wound” given in Strong’s, and TWOT. AHLB offers this: 2628) **מָצַח** (מצח PTsAh) ac: **Smash** co: **Bruise** ab: **?**: A bruise from being smashed. [from: **מָצַח**].¹⁴

The next phrase, “that cleanses” is not very remarkable except that Strong’s, TWOT and AHLB all confirm that it is a cleansing or polishing by rubbing or scrubbing. We saw the rubbing element in Gill’s commentary above where he stated that the wound “rubs it off and scours it[evil] away.” KJV includes the sense of purification.

And then we come to an important piece regarding evil and its forms. Here it is written as in “cleanses-- away evil.” **רָע** *ra`* Strong’s # H 7451 It is from H 7489, meaning “bad” or “evil” naturally or morally.¹⁵ The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament offers the discussion and comparison of “tov” and “ra”, as good and bad, or life and death. It is observed that it is like the comparison of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and that it often refers to a condition of the heart.¹⁶ The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon offers this list of meaning:

N^{m/f} **רָע** (רע RCh) - **I. Bad**: Something dysfunctional, wrong, evil or wicked. **II. Shout**: To shout an alarm, war or great rejoicing. [freq. 666] |kiv: evil, wickedness, wicked, mischief, hurt, bad, trouble, sore, affliction, ill, adversity, favoured, harm, naught, noisesome, grievous, sad, shout, noise, aloud| {str: 7451, 7452}¹⁷

Moving into the second parallel line, we find both confirmation and additional insight for these concepts.

¹² Clarke, *ibid*.

¹³ Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible; Jeff Benner; as provided via E-sword.

¹⁴ AHLB; Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible; Benner, Jeff, as provided via E-sword.

¹⁵ E-sword program with Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionary.

¹⁶ TWOT; Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer, Waltke, Moody Press.

¹⁷ AHLB: Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible, Jeff Benner; as provided via E-sword.

“As do stripes”: מַכָּה *makkah* is Strong’s # H4347 from the root word H 5221 carrying the primary meanings of blow, wound, slaughter. *The Outline of Biblical Usage* further lists 1. blow, stripe 2. Beating, scouring 3. Wound 4. Slaughter 5. Defeat, conquest 6. Plague¹⁸ Gesenius’ Lexicon further notes that the word is commonly taken to be for wheat beaten out or threshed. It may be connected to the use of plagues or the idea that these are calamities inflicted by God; or a slaughter in battle wrought by God.¹⁹

And here TWOT has a few additional interesting observations. TWOT 1364 corresponds to *makkah* and is said to be used about 500 times, in many different ways, not all directly referring to warfare. It may refer to non-fatal striking, blow, target and may also refer to being “smitten in conscience” ie. David when he cut off Saul’s skirt.

TWOT further observed that the Song of Solomon 5:7 notes that this root word was used of the Bride as she sought the Bridegroom in the city. Earlier in the story, Chapter 3, she went about the city and was not harmed by the watchmen there, but later, she was afflicted. Both the form of wound/bruise and blow/strike are found in this reference.²⁰

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

TWOT also offered additional observations on Proverbs 19:25 and 23:13-14 which note the importance of beating for the sake of acquiring wisdom and discipline.

[Pro 19:25 NKJV] 25 *Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary; Rebuke one who has understanding, [and] he will discern knowledge.*

[Pro 23:13-14 NKJV] 13 *Do not withhold correction from a child, For [if] you beat him with a rod, he will not die. 14 You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell.*

To paraphrase and briefly summarize additional comments from TWOT, the idea of repetitive beatings is seen in the plagues of Egypt. Our Elohim, Himself, is often the subject of *makkah* because He smites people in various ways, both through illness and nature, for their discipline. This word is sometimes translated as “wound” and is used by prophets speaking of the condition of His people, having been wounded or smitten by an enemy due to their sin.

AHLB adds another dimension. 1310) שֵׁן (שן NK) ac: **Crush** co: **Spice** ab: ? : The pictograph ש is a picture of a seed, the ש is a picture of the palm of the hand. Combined these mean "seed in the palm". Seeds of certain plants were placed in the palm and rubbed with the thumb to a powdery

¹⁸ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *makkah* (Strong's 4347)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 7 Dec 2013. < <http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H4347&t=KJV> >

¹⁹ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *makkah* (Strong's 4347)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 7 Dec 2013. < <http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H4347&t=KJV> >

²⁰ TWOT *ibid.*

spice.²¹

A wound can also then be described as a crushing, but this crushing can be for good, as in the case of spices. Now perhaps I can see the intended imagery of this psalmist more clearly.

Psa 51:8 *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast crushed may rejoice.*
JPS

The next phrase, “the innermost parts” or “inner depths” is from H2315 - *cheder* חֶדֶר and is defined as being chamber, room, parlour, innermost or inward part, within.²² TWOT has lengthy commentary on this word, numbering it 612a. A closely related word 612 is “*chadar*” and is used only once, in Ezekiel 21:19, meaning “that which surrounds them.” 612a is generally used in reference to inner rooms of the temple complex though not for the holy or most holy place. It is used to refer to storerooms, or rooms in which people might find privacy or hide. It is used as the room of the Bridegroom in Joel 2:16 and the birth place of the Bride and place she brings the Bridegroom to in Song of Solomon 5. According to TWOT, the word is used four times figuratively referring to chambers within the belly, and Prov. 20:30 is one of the four.

(Though not related to this study, I include this next observation because of the interesting ramifications.--In Job 37:9 it is used figuratively of the chamber from which a stormwind comes. And KJV translates it as “south” for the assumed source of the stormwind..but RSV is probably more accurate in rending from its chamber comes the whirlwind. “Chamber of the south” Job 9:9 may name a constellation or be the confines of one.)²³

AHLB confirms Strong’s and TWOT observations.

The final phrase, “of the belly” is Strong's H990 – *beten* בֶּטֶן. The Outline of Biblical Usage indicates it refers to belly, womb or body, and further specifies the belly or abdomen as a seat of hunger, a seat of mental faculties or of depth of Sheol (figuratively).²⁴ TWOT, number 236, has a few additional points. The Semitic cognates indicate it means “interior” while the Hebrew tends to mean the “lower abdomen.” It can refer to a womb, but has a much broader range of meaning than the word more specifically used for “womb.” It is used several times in the wisdom literature to refer to the deepest recesses of a person or the seat of the desire. It is used in parallel with “*nephesh*” to express the totality of a person.²⁵ AHLB confirms what was already seen.

²¹ AHLB: *ibid*.

²² Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *cheder* (Strong's 2315)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 29 Dec 2013. < [http:// www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2315& amp;t=KJV](http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2315&t=KJV) >

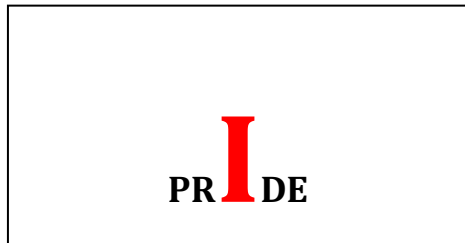
²³ TWOT; Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament; Harris, Archer, Waltke; Moody Press.

²⁴ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *beten* (Strong's 990)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 29 Dec 2013. < [http:// www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H990& amp;t=KJV](http://www.blbclassic.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H990&t=KJV) >

²⁵ TWOT; Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament; Harris, Archer, Walkte; Moody Press.

Pride Study

This study included a listing of many scriptural references to pride and its various forms as a means of helping people recognize and then address them. Though the listing was thorough, it was simply the title and the way it was presented that caught my eye and heart. The title was simply written in all capital letters, with the center and largest one being in red:



The visual impact of this alone, seemed profound to me.²⁶ The center of the list of things our Abba hates as listed in Proverbs 6:16-19 is none other than the heart that deceives wicked plans. And the heart is our representation for the innermost place, the seat of deepest desire. Those plans are conceived with “I” prominently in mind. We may be conflicted about putting forth our own interests while also desiring to be like Messiah. All too often, our flesh desires masquerade as “spiritual instruction.” For those who have experienced a genuine calling from our Elohim, it has long been apparent to many that pride is the single greatest predictor and source of failure. How much more so would this be true for those who desire to be found with clean hands and a pure heart, to be fully ready to hear the cry that goes up when Messiah returns!

One often cannot see where pride has found its way in but needs the exhortation and encouragement of relationships in which accountability is welcomed. I conclude that this is one reason that Torah can only truly be walked out in relationship with others, and ideally in a Torah pursuant community.

Psalm 51: “a broken spirit and a contrite heart”- theme for Sukkoth, The Season of our Joy

This past Sukkoth, following a year in which “Come Away with Me, My Beloved” had been a continuing theme of worship and study, I understood that Psalm 51, specifically the portion referring to the importance of a broken spirit and a contrite heart, was to be our theme for Sukkoth. We are a community that sets up our *Chuppah* at Pesach, because we view that gathering as a Betrothal Feast as much as it is a remembrance of deliverance past. Now, to rehearse the Season of our Joy, the “Marriage Feast of the Lamb to come” with a theme of broken spirits and heartfelt contrition seemed like it could be missing the point of the anticipatory joy. We found it intensely personal in meaning, though various and necessary activities during Sukkoth made it more challenging for many to find personal quiet prayer time, the message and importance of it came through our corporate prayer, worship and study. It continued to surface

²⁶ <http://www.geekality.net/2010/11/28/symptoms-of-pride/>

over the months since our return. In personal examination and repentance one by one, sadly not all, but a number of our members experienced some kind of exposure of innermost concerns that needed to come to light. HalleluYah! He is faithful and we began to see evidence again of an answer to our continuing prayer for most of the past 14 years that He would expose anything in or among us that is not pleasing to Him, and then provide the strength, courage, perseverance and joy to resolve it in a way that honors Him.

Drawing It Together

Now having examined the words and concepts more closely, the message of the need for discipline of some kind comes through. This is not new, however, I hadn't before seen the potential connection with this understanding specifically for those who are seeking the most intimate relationship with our Messiah, so that we may enter His chuppah!

It is difficult at this point to address this in a strictly linear fashion so I have made a mindmap to help sort out the various aspects. It is available on request.

Blows/Wounds/Stripes/Two/Joined/Pierced

As so commonly happens in Hebrew, various words actually overlap and amplify the same topic: blueness/wounds/stripes. Yet each carries some additional connotations that expose the full picture. Blueness and bruising seem intuitively related to me in English, but in the Hebrew perspective, there are aspects related to "two" concepts. Not just the bruising that results from rubbing together or chafing from being in close proximity or joined, but also the picture of the two edges of a wound that need to be drawn together to heal. I learned that new word, cicatrix, which seems to refer to that which grows to bring them together, or perhaps what we'd call scar tissue.

Because of the close root word association with the concept of joining, I couldn't help but consider the marriage picture and how that close relationship is also "two becoming one" through the growth of something that wasn't there before. It is not without stress and pain! A dear brother in Messiah, upon hearing of this search, observed rather quickly that he began to wonder about the Levites who were "joined." The picture of those in closest proximity to YHWH/His Tabernacle, being subjected to the deepest of challenges and blows and bruising while they pursued honoring Him jumped into my mind's eye. There has been a connection between the Bride of Messiah and the Priesthood in my understanding (and many others) for some time. So this portion of the Bride, the Levites who were joined together in companionship with Him, also suffered the pain of close association and rubbing off or scouring away anything that is not of Him...evil.

Some years ago I had studied and written notes of what I consider the difficult aspect of men seeing themselves as a Bride though the final study is not yet finished. Therefore the TWOT reference to this verse being related to the story of the Bride as told in the Song of Solomon seemed to have great import to me. It is not only the joining and rubbing together that leads to the new growth, it is also the penetration picture as YHWH pierces our innermost being, just as a husband with his wife in the flesh. This picture, too, seems related to the blows that hurt cleansing

our hearts and is connected with the Bride picture. Earlier in the story, in chapter 3, the Bride has gone out among the city and though she was found by the watchman, she was not hindered by them in her search for the Beloved. After having been smitten and wounded in the streets later, in chapter five of Song of Solomon, the Bride says that she is “sick” of love. The word “sick” is from “*chala*” and figuratively refers to being weak, sick or afflicted. But there is more.

AHLB offers this note on the “root” word:

AHLB#: 1173-H (V)

1173) חלל (חלל HhL) ac: Bore co: Hole ab: Pain: A hole is drilled with a tool called a bow drill. The string of the bow is wrapped around the drill. By moving the bow back and forth, and firmly pressing down, the drill spins around drilling the hole. (eng: hole; hollow)

More specifically, the word is used in this verse refers to:

V) חלל (חלל Hh-LH) - I. Sick: II. Beseech: To request intervention from a sickness or other trouble. [freq. 75] (vf: Paal, Niphal, Hiphil, Hitpaal, Hophal, Pual, Piel) [kjv: sick, beseech, weak, grievous, diseased, wounded, pray, entreat, grief, grieved, sore, pain, infirmity] {str: 2470} ²⁷

Since Hebrew is a language that uses simple pictures from the physical realm, we see a picture that the Bride is describing herself as weak, sick or afflicted, with the pictographic picture of having been pierced through by the rubbing back and forth of the love relationship, and asking for intervention in the matter.

The very Hebrew words for “male” and “female” also confirm this picture in my understanding. It is to be a part of the larger project, for which the introduction has been completed, [‘And the Two Shall Become One.’](#) These words are often perceived as “initiator” and “responder” but I also see a picture that would include the idea that a penetration of something also leads irrevocably to that “something” surrounding what penetrates it. The word translated “innermost parts” or “inward places” that are cleansed through the blows is said to mean something like an inner room, or a place of privacy, and TWOT observes that this particular usage in Proverbs 20:30 refers to the inward chambers of the belly or a womb. A closely related word, used only once as noted above, includes the concept of surrounding.

Then, the word translated as “stripes” expands the picture...the crushing as a form of wounding. How do bones that are crushed rejoice? Sir Isaac Newton observed that in Scripture, “bones” are often used metaphorically, referring to the strength of a person. ²⁸ Rather than viewing this as destructive, in the context of drawing near to the Almighty, Covenant keeping Elohim, we do rejoice when we come through the crushing and realize ever more clearly that our strength is as nothing while also seeing that His strength is our inexhaustible source. As I have been thinking

²⁷ AHLB entry as provided through E-sword online Bible.

²⁸

http://www.blbclassic.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=11&contentID=15533&commInfo=10&topic=Daniel%20and%20Revelation

through these matters these past few weeks, my prayer journaling has brought a few phrases I have never spoken or written before that seem relevant here. “Nothing is beyond You! Everything is beyond me.” “ My God is all. I am small.” Again, looking to the picture of the Bride found in the Song of Solomon, we see that she was despised and rejected by the world which I would also perceive as a picture of having no strength in their eyes, or having come to the realization that personal strength will not be enough, or in effect, any personal pride or confidence we might have in our own physical attributes will be stripped away as we continue to pursue our Husband to be.

And in the paleo Hebrew for “stripes”, we see a picture of spices, whose beauty is really only appreciated once the source of them is crushed and turned to powder. This also brings to mind [a study I did a number of years ago on salt and the connection with crushing](#). The salt of the earth needs to be pulverized to have impact. I asked then, and ask again: leaders/shepherds, are you ready to be crushed? I am still surprised by the weight and impact of it.

Adam Clarke also had some good observations in regard to the verse that led up to the one under consideration here. It offers a comparison between the strength of young men and the grey heads.

*Pro 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength:
and the beauty of old men is the gray head.*

The blows that cleanse evil from the heart will be directly related to each one’s need. Of course, the matter of personal pride is an issue no matter what age or stage of life. If one needs chastening because too much personal glory is being assumed in physical strength, so be it. If one needs chastening because one’s acquired knowledge brings personal acclaim rather than pointing to our Elohim, so be it. Either way, the circumstances will appear crushing to the bones/strength. With humility, the crushing results in rejoicing. With pride, it will destroy.

*Hebrews: 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous:
nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are
exercised thereby.*

I am amazed again at the complexity and intricacy with which our Abba has inspired His Word. There seem to be no depths that we can go to that will bring up something inconsistent with the overall message and picture. The thematic pictures do indeed indicate that He clearly knows and foretells the future from the beginning. In this study, my original focus was brought to the concept of blows, both physically and figuratively, being a source of cleansing from evil or that which competes with what is good. Quickly, in the word study, I was also led to the connection with the Bride as seen in Song of Solomon, as well as our own community experiences with the leading of His Spirit in our study and worship.

Now, the Song of Solomon story seems to me to be yet another end times picture of our experience now awaiting Messiah’s return. Is it apparent to you now, too?

We who have had some connection with Him and have developed some intimacy in relationship yet at times do turn or fall away from Him. Like the Beloved in Song of Solomon, after having declared His love for the woman, YHWH at times does withdraw Himself from us. He does not abandon us, yet He gives us opportunity to learn and grow; demonstrating the genuineness of our faith as we pursue Him for Who He is, rather than just what He does for us. At these times, we experience the blows and wounds that work in His purpose to show us the inadequacy of our own perceived strength, cleansing our hearts from things that are not of Him, particularly pride, a most pernicious source of falling.

This is true throughout the ages, but we are told that as we near the end and His return, the apostate church, the falling away, will be widespread. So earlier on, those who sought Him, believers in general or those who have a deep desire to be found among the five wise virgins, may have been seen by the watchmen as they pursued Him, but there was not significant interference.

Do these watchmen, *shamar*, represent those within the Body of Believers in a city or simply civil watchmen? I didn't yet find anything to differentiate this matter. If it represents watchmen from the House of God, perhaps we may simply see that in earlier times, they didn't step up or interfere with those who were earnestly seeking relationship with our Elohim, especially through His Son our Messiah. There seems to be no indication in the Song of Solomon verses whether or not they provided any encouragement the first time the woman was in the streets searching. However, in a parallel way, we have now experienced a long season in which He has withdrawn Himself from us and things have changed. For some of us personally here, there has been a sense that He has been quieter than usual for some time, not making His direction as clearly obvious. Yet, we remain certain that He is present and does provide guidance, just more "from a distance." This has been a source of sadness, grief for us as we intercede and ask for His intervention. The understanding has generally been something like, "wait...the time is not yet." We wonder if others who are diligently seeking Him are also experiencing any similar thing?

If this picture does indeed provide us another glimpse from the past into the future, then we would see that our Beloved *has* withdrawn Himself for a season. When we diligently seek Him, particularly in the public square now there will be interference. Some who are seeking Him openly have already died for their faith, true through the ages but growing in number quickly now. Are these the civil watchmen or might they be watchmen from the apostate church, the fallen away ones who have only the appearance of righteousness yet not the substance? Certainly the civil watchmen have long made it apparent that they do not honor those who seek the God of Israel.

Despite our hope and the often misleading teaching that following Messiah brings only wealth, joy and prosperity, we are experiencing the effects of His having withdrawn Himself. Should we despair and turn away from Him, fearing the worst? Do we assume that all is lost when we cannot immediately draw near to Him? No! The increased opposition to those who are genuinely seeking Him only confirms that He is indeed still preparing those who seek Him!! It is the very blows, wounding, stripes or crushing that are part and parcel of His care for us! I believe it was Oswald Chambers who noted that He will bring into the light all the ways we take offense until there is

nothing offend-able left. Our personal sense of strength does need to be crushed so that we can and must enter more fully into His strength and rest!

Psalm 51, the words on the acceptableness of a broken spirit and a contrite heart to our Elohim, are all the more powerful as I see this picture of the Bride, who is already set apart and in relationship with Messiah, enduring yet more pain, separation and brokenness. It is NOT because of any rift in the relationship. It is all the more evidence of the relationship that calls us out of ourselves —our focus on the flesh: mind, will and emotions, the world or the evil one’s schemes. As we set ourselves apart from our daily surroundings, schedules and work for Sukkoth, He was reaching inwardly to us for the cleansing that He knows all too well is yet needed...our innermost places. As the two become one, the Bride-being-perfected to the perfect Messiah Husband to be, there is pain in the joining, but what is grown between them is something new and stronger!

Of course it would be our Messiah, the Head of our Household, Who is able to bring together the two to a single point. And indeed, it was only He that could in another larger sense, through His own blueness of His wounds provide the healing that we all need.²⁹ Though the Hebrew words are not exactly the same, except one, the concepts are certainly deeply connected.

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isa 53:4 Surely^{H403} he^{H1931} hath borne^{H5375} our griefs,^{H2483} and carried^{H5445} our sorrows:^{H4341} yet we^{H587} did esteem^{H2803} him stricken,^{H5060} smitten^{H5221} of God,^{H430} and afflicted.^{H6031}
Isa 53:5 But he^{H1931} was wounded^{H2490} for our transgressions,^{H4480 H6588} he was bruised^{H1792} for our iniquities:^{H4480 H5771} the chastisement^{H4148} of our peace^{H7965} was upon^{H5921} him; and with his stripes^{H2250} we are healed.^{H7495}

Additional Pictures

To my joy and chagrin, as I researched even this much, I saw more comparisons, parallel matters and prophetic pictures to tend to. There is never an end to the gems in depths of the Word, a joy for eternity, but oh, so time consuming to search out in this season! As briefly mentioned above, I do have a sense that this direction of study will lead to further work in the “And the Two Shall become One” study so we will see what develops. In Part 2, I will build on what has been begun here, adding these topics:

²⁹ From John Gill’s commentary

[Our Library Commentaries John Gill's Exposition of the Bible Proverbs Proverbs 20 Proverbs 20:30](#)

- 1) The room of the Bridegroom in Joel 2:16 and the birth place of the Bride and place she brings the Bridegroom to in Song of Solomon 5 and the possible connection with blows in the innermost place; the deepest part of a person; the seat of desires.
- 2) The question of the Bride, called a dove and undefiled, not wanting to defile her feet to open the door to the Beloved; and the possible connection of this with Messiah telling Peter that only his feet needed to be washed from defilement.
- 3) Possible connections between the concepts of withdrawing, backsliding, compass, and go about as seen in the Song of Solomon verses and compared with a similar phraseology in Jeremiah.
- 4) Concepts related to the Bride “passing over” or being separated and being a door or a wall, and discussion of our SAM leading since June, 2013 to practice what we have understood to be “prayer on the wall” around our community gatherings, as stones being built into His wall.

Until then, my hope and prayer is that this line of study will awaken and increase the encouragement of the Spirit within each of the readers to be diligently seeking the One we love. This seeking will be within our own hearts as well as tending to the matters of personal maturity, to bring all of our mind, will, emotions, body and spirit under the authority of His Spirit. It involves being willing to experience the blows that are a necessary part of being made ready to meet Him face to face. *Kumi ori, Yeshuati!*

YHWH Elohim, our steadfast, loving, covenant keeping God, we do seek You and we do diligently ask you to intercede on our behalf, to further the work that must be done within us as you prepare us individually and yet corporately, to be a sanctified vessel, with clean hands and a pure heart, so that we can meet you with confidence that You will finish what You have begun at the right time and place. Please do what is necessary to bring our personal darkness into light in the covenant relationships You have provided for us to be sharpened and set apart. Please grant us Your strength, joy, courage and perseverance to then find resolution that is pleasing to You in all of these matters. May it be so, b'shem Yeshua haMaschiach!

If you found encouragement here, will you please consider sharing these words with others? Our leading has been to avoid using the social media connections, preferring instead to connect through the personal interactions of those who have been brought to our materials. Will you also please prayerfully consider helping us meet our costs to make this material available to all? General donation buttons through PayPal are available on the home page of our site and check or money orders may be mailed to the address below. We here at our local SAM community would enjoy making your acquaintance and hearing your thoughts on these matters. May our Abba bless and strengthen each of you as only He can!

www.Set-Apart-Ministries.org www.PrepareMessiahsBride.org
www.PlantandGrowMessianicFellowships.org
info@set-apart-ministries.org

Set Apart Ministries, Inc.

P. O. Box 5584 De Pere, WI 54115

(920) 336-7005