

Deep Sleep

And it happened as the sun was setting and a deep sleep fell on Abram, and behold, a terror of great darkness falling on him

Genesis 15:12

Deep Sleep—One of the principles of Hebraic interpretation is connection thoughts based on similar words. When a word appears only a few times in Scripture, the connections become even more important because each “dot” adds to the overall concept. So, when we encounter a word like *tardema* (deep sleep) which occurs only seven times, we want to be sure we see where the connections lead us. This is particularly important when we draw the connection between Abraham and Adam.

Genesis repeats themes that are crucial for living according to God’s plan. Here we have the first (but not the last) repetition of the story of Adam and Havvah replayed in the lives of Abraham and Sarah. The choice of *tardema* is a reminder of the story of Adam. We need to pay close attention to the implications. Here’s what we discover.

In both cases, God causes this trance. In both cases, God is the active agent in the covenant formation. Notice the results. Abraham sleeps while God does the work. Abraham is the *beneficiary* of the resulting covenant. He is not a material partner in the agreement. Everything important happens while he sleeps. He wakes to find a new situation, one that establishes an eternal promise for his benefit.

Apply that insight to Adam. While Adam sleeps, God works. God brings into existence the Woman who is specifically designed to reflect the application of God’s will. She is built to have an intuitive understanding of God’s boundaries and moment-to-moment direction. She is the partner in covenant relationship with God. Adam wakes to find that his world has changed. But he had nothing to do with it. He is the *beneficiary* of the relationship between God and Havvah. In Adam’s situation, the *‘ezer kenegdo* has a connection to God that benefits the man, just as Abraham is benefited by God’s promise to Himself. In other words, the red-flag marker of *tardema* begs us to see that the work of the Lord is for the well-being of the male even though neither male actively participates in the arrangement. This helps us realize that there are really two covenants in marriage. One covenant is the promise of fidelity between the husband and wife. The other is the covenant relationship between the *‘ezer* and God. One is voluntary; the other is divinely-designed.

What does this mean? It means that God’s work in creating the *‘ezer kenegdo* is connected to God’s work in establishing the covenant of promise with Abraham. The Woman is God’s *first* manifestation of promise. Man needs help. God supplies help. Man is the beneficiary of God’s supply. We are reminded of the critical role the Woman plays. We see that her role is to provide *shalom* to her charge. The design of God’s covenant for Abraham results in the opportunity for *shalom* for all Mankind. Don’t you suppose that the design of God’s “helper” for Adam has the same horizon? Did you think the creation story was disconnected from the redemption story? The *‘ezer kenegdo* is God’s answer to the problem of being alone, just as the covenant with Abraham is God’s answer to the problem of being separated. The similarities are impossible to deny. The Woman plays a crucial role in the manifestation of reunion. She is the foretaste of the promise of unity and marriage is the vehicle through which this unity is accomplished.