

PART TWO

God's Inexhaustible Word

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Discovering Biblical Dance

*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter
and the glory of kings to search it out.*

—Proverbs 25:2

I had been diligently reading the Bible for decades, but I didn't know much about what it said regarding dance. It wasn't until I was released into dancing for the Lord that I began to study what the Word says about it. Finding multiple mentions of dance in the Bible, I dug deeper, and the Word came alive. I discovered that as there are different types of dance, there are also about as many different circumstances resulting in dance. Much can be lost in translation, and that's why it's such a wonderful thing when the Lord stirs your heart to seek Him more, to look into the deeper meanings of His Word.

Take a peek at the Definitions of Dance in the Appendix section. Listed there are the Hebraic or Aramaic, and Greek words the Bible uses that are translated to some form of the English word *dance*. Read through these eight listings and see if you can distinguish which one more accurately describes David's dance versus the dances of Shiloh, the marauders dance, and Herodias' dance.

Let's look at the variety of dance in God's holy Word. Miriam's dance in Exodus 15:20 included other people. Besides herself, the scripture says that all the women went out after her with tambourines (specifically timbrels—small hand drums) and with dancing. The Hebrew word for *dancing* is *m^echôlâh* (mek-o-law'), the feminine form of *mâchôwl* (maw-khole'), which is a very general form of dance.

I imagine that Miriam burst into spontaneous dance over God's mighty act of bringing them through the sea on dry ground and then destroying the Egyptian army when they tried to pass through in pursuit. God's chosen people had sudden and complete freedom from Egypt, and Miriam exuberantly drew the women to join her in celebratory worship. I imagine them spontaneously dancing individually as well as in groups, or possibly dancing the familiar steps of something they all knew by tradition.

Maybe you've seen artwork depicting Miriam with a handful of other women, dancing with tambourines in their hands. Artwork sometimes helps our imaginative processes, and other times it may cause us to carry an untrue picture in our minds. Miriam was part of an enormous number of people who left Egypt.

*Then Bnei-Yisrael journeyed from Rameses to Succoth,
about 600,000 men on foot, as well as children. Also a
mixed multitude went up with them...*
—Exodus 12:37–38

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