

“The Jewish Wedding  
And  
The Sound of the Shofar”



A Prophetic Look at the Bride  
And  
The Time Table of the Messiah  
By: Cathy Bentley

“The Ancient Jewish Wedding”

A Prophetic Model for the Rapture

Dear Precious Student of the Word,

In our studies so far, we have discovered that studying Jewish patterns and customs of Jesus' day will help us uncover end times truth about Jesus' Second Coming and the patterns that God has hidden in the Bible! Jesus' ministry of miracles starts at a wedding in Cana and ends at another wedding event we know as the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation. Think of all the parables that He taught about weddings, the 10 virgins, the bridegroom, the invited guests who wouldn't come, the feast prepared, and lots more! The funny thing we never realized is that Jesus was always teaching about prophecy and the last days when he taught about weddings! Since we believe that Jesus is coming back to take a bride and we want to be in that group, we need to find out all we can about the wedding customs Jesus would have been referring to!

**1. The Father picks the bride** - In all Eastern lands, the bride is picked for the son. Remember that the bride will leave her family and house and become part of groom's family. She will live in the Father's house, probably in built- on addition and it is important that she fit in! Sometimes the marriages would be arranged at birth between 2 favorable families and they would never see each other until the wedding day. Occasionally, the bride or groom was consulted beforehand!

**Adam** is first bridegroom (Gen. 3). God makes Eve just for Adam. (Remember that Adam was God's son, just like Jesus is the Son of God). God put Adam to sleep (symbolic of death and Jesus' crucifixion) and piercing his side, removed a rib, causing blood to flow. (Jesus was pierced in the side, causing blood to flow). From the rib of Adam, God formed Eve, the bride. From the death of Jesus, God formed the church, who will be the bride of Christ!

Abraham picks for Isaac.

Naomi picks for Ruth.

Esau won't listen to his parents and takes the wrong wife.

Samson won't listen to his parents and takes the wrong wife!

**2. A marriage broker or helper is called upon.** The Father would determine the terms and the bride price He was prepared to offer; the Helper would be sent to negotiate with the parents and the bride-to-be! He would take gifts, the contract wine and to present the offer! **Abraham sends Eliezer** (Gen 24) for Isaac's bride riding 10 camels with gifts and a proposal. Rebecca agreed to marry a man she had never seen! Having not seen Jesus but assured of His covenant of love, we agree by faith to accept Him! *Call Him The Holy Spirit!*

**3. A Jewish Marriage is a legal contract separated in time by 2 different ceremonies!**

The first part (which we would call the betrothal), "**the kiddush in or erasing,**" is completed with negotiating the marriage terms and paying a bride price, **the mohair**, signing a legal document, (the kasbah), **giving** gifts as a pledge, and drinking a covenant cup of wine to seal the deal! The couple will then separate for at least a year while the Son prepares a wedding chamber for the Bride at His Father's House. The Bride anoints her body with sweet smelling perfumes and prepares for her future, thinking only of when her beloved will come for her! Usually after midnight, and at a time when only He knows, the Father says "Son, go get your bride!" He is dressed like a king, and at the sound of the trumpet, a shout is heard, "The Bridegroom comes!" He starts eagerly for her home, and she rushes to meet him. (The bride is actually kidnapped!) They joyously parade through the streets to the father's home and the actual wedding (the Nesu'in) is performed with 2 witnesses, one witness leads the groom and one leads the bride. (Remember John is called the friend of the bridegroom in the Bible? Immediately they will enter the specially prepared bridal chamber, the chider to consummate the marriage while the guests celebrate for a whole week.

**4. The Wedding Feast is celebrated after the honeymooner's return to their guests!**

*Can you discern any Bible Truths about the Rapture of the Church?*

## 5. The Blood on the sheets during the consummation seals the marriage covenant!

Just like the Blood of Jesus on the cross sealed our salvation covenant!

**6. The Ketubah, the marriage contract is a legal covenant document that must be signed and witnessed.** It states the bride price, the promises of the groom to love and to honor her, to provide all necessities for and to protect her, and to be faithful to her forever. The bride and the groom must speak out loud their intent, by saying "I do."

The day you get saved, and ask Jesus to be Lord of your life, is the day you sign the Ketubah and become betrothed! The 10 commandments in the Old Covenant were Israel's ketubah. The Bible is our wedding ketubah stating that we have a New and better covenant through the blood of Jesus.

## 7. The Bride Price is Precious

Since the bride will leave her household, and all the duties she would perform now must be assigned to someone else, a bride price is decide upon to pray for her. According to the wealth of the groom's family, the Father will offer the best He has for His son's bride. 1 Peter 1: 18-19 tells the best that God offered for us was the very lifeblood of His Son.

*"Foreasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ "*

1 Cor. 6:20 *"For you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

The bride will usually wear the coins of the bride price in her veil. Whenever there is a divorce in Israel, the bride is granted only her garments, so the brideprice is very important to her. Remember the parable of the woman who had 10 coins and lost one and how she rejoiced when she found it?

## 6. Gifts are given and the Cup is shared

The betrothal is sealed with the giving of gifts and drinking a covenant cup of wine together. The gift today would be the engagement ring, but the gifts given to the new believers who accepted Jesus would have been far more precious than diamonds, **righteousness**, eternal life, **grace**, **faith**, **forgiveness**, **hope**, joy. Add to these, the gifts the Holy Spirit brings, **wisdom**, **miracles**, **healing**, **knowledge**, **prophecy**, **discernment of spirits**, **tongues**, **interpretation of tongues**, as well as **helps**, and **administration**. (1 Cor.12: 8-11,28)

The cup is the cup of the covenant. Jer. 31:31-33 tells of God's covenant with Israel. But Jesus spoke of the cup He longed to drink with us in Luke 22:20. Every time you take communion you are remembering the betrothal cup that marries you to Jesus and pledges His return to take you as His bride!

**The Mikvah** - after the betrothal, the bride had a mikvah, a purification ceremony by water immersion, symbolizing a separation (sanctification) into a new life. **Baptism** is a symbol of the change from your former life and your eagerness to enter your new life!

Jesus' ministry starts at the wedding feast in Cana and ends at His Wedding Feast!

The Bride and Groom live happily together forever just as you and I will live happily together with Our LORD for eternity!

Hallelujah to the Lamb of God!

# “The Wedding Scriptures & Bible Prophecy Patterns”

## New Testament Prophetic Patterns

1. “Wedding at Cana” - John Chapter One
2. “The Wedding Banquet” - Matthew 22:1-14  
Luke 14:15-24
3. “The 10 Virgins” - Matthew Chapter 25
4. Christ & the Church - Husbands & Wives - Ephesians 5:21-33
5. “The Wedding Supper of the Lamb” - Revelation 19:7-9

## Old Testament Prophetic Patterns

1. Adam & Eve - “Leave and Cleave” - Genesis 2:21-25
2. Isaac & Rebekah - “The Father Picks the Bride” - Genesis 24
3. Jacob & Rachel - “The Wedding Week” - Genesis 29:1-30
4. Samson & His Pagan Wife - “The Wedding Week” - Judges 14
5. Esther & The King - “Anointed & Chosen”
6. Ruth & Boaz - “The Kinsman Redeemer” - Book of Ruth

Lovingly Prepared for the Church - The Bride of Christ  
We who are Watching and Waiting for Jesus to Come  
By Cathy Bentley - September 2014  
[www.connectedtotheword.com](http://www.connectedtotheword.com)

## John 2 "The 1<sup>st</sup> Miracle & The Wedding at Cana" Prophetic Pictures

1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:  
The 3<sup>rd</sup> Day in Bible Prophecy – There will be another Wedding!
- 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.  
Jesus and His Disciples (US) are called to the Wedding Feast!
- 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine.
- 4 Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come. (Kairos – My appointed Time – The Festival of the Lord Timetable)  
Will the Wedding Supper of the Lamb also happen on a Festival?
- 5 His mother said to the servants, Whatsoever He says to you, do it.  
(As servants of the Kingdom, whatever Jesus says to us by the Holy Ghost, do it)
- 6 And there were set there 6 waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.
- 7 Jesus said unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. ( 6 full waterpots = 6000 years fulfilled)
- 8 And He said to them, Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bare it. (The governor of the feast – The Lord God Almighty)
- 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, ( Jesus' true servants recognize Him)
- 10 And said unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but You hast kept the good wine until now.
- 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and his disciples believed on Him.

## Mathew 22:1-14 “ The Wedding Banquet”

<sup>1</sup> And Jesus answered and spoke unto them again by parables, and said,

<sup>2</sup> The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a marriage for His son,

<sup>3</sup> And sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ( Israel)

<sup>4</sup> Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

<sup>5</sup> But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

<sup>6</sup> And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

<sup>7</sup> But when the King heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

<sup>8</sup> Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

<sup>9</sup> Go therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage.

<sup>10</sup> So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

<sup>11</sup> And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

<sup>12</sup> And he said to him, Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment? And the man was speechless.

<sup>13</sup> Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen.

*Extra Commentary in Back - Man with no Wedding Garment*

## Luke 14: 14-24 “Parable of the Great Banquet”

- <sup>15</sup> And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said to Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.
- <sup>16</sup> Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:
- <sup>17</sup> And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.
- <sup>18</sup> And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I need to go and see it: I pray you, excuse me
- <sup>19</sup> And another said, I have bought 5 yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray, excuse me.
- <sup>20</sup> And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I can't come.
- <sup>21</sup> So that servant came, and showed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.
- <sup>22</sup> And the servant said, Lord, it is done as You have commanded, and yet there is room.
- <sup>23</sup> And the Lord said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My House may be filled.
- <sup>24</sup> For I say to you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.

## Revelation 19:9-7 “The Wedding Supper of the Lamb”

- <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.
- <sup>8</sup> And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
- <sup>9</sup> And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true sayings of God.



## Matthew 25 "The 10 Virgins & Bible Prophecy"

1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto 10 virgins,  
which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
2. And 5 of them were wise, and 5 were foolish.
3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh;  
go ye out to meet Him.
7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.
8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil;  
for our lamps are gone out.
9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us & you:  
but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.
10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came;  
and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage:  
and the door was shut.
11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
13. Watch therefore,  
  
for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Ephesians 5: 21-33 “ Husbands & Wives - Christ & The Church”

<sup>21</sup> Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife,  
even as Christ is the head of the church:  
and He is the savior of the body.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore as the church is subject to Christ,  
so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,  
and gave Himself for it;

<sup>26</sup> That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

<sup>27</sup> That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church,  
not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;  
but that it (The Church) should be holy and without blemish.

<sup>28</sup> So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.  
He that loves his wife loves himself.

<sup>29</sup> For no man ever yet hated his own flesh;  
but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church:

<sup>30</sup> For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

<sup>31</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,  
and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

<sup>32</sup> This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself;  
and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

## Old Testament Wedding Patterns & Themes

The Word of God is full of weddings, which is a wonderful picture of the mystery of Jesus and His Church. In each of these well-known marriages, the central theme emphasizes the blessing and safety of our Covenant in Christ. All are amazing “prophetic patterns” for our forever relationships IN CHRIST.

### Genesis Chapter 2 “Adam & Eve - Leave & Cleave”

18. “It is not good that man should be alone: I will make a help meet for him.”  
21. And God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept:  
took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof.  
22. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man,  
made He a woman and brought her to the man.  
23. And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh:  
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.  
24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother  
and cleave to His wife, and they shall be one flesh.”  
25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

In like manner, when we get saved, we are to LEAVE the world and Cleave to the Word. As Adam and Eve became ONE, we are now ONE with Christ, also ONE with the true Church. We are NAKED and UNASHAMED in our marriages, and do not hide important things from one another. If we walk in integrity and transparency with our Church family, great blessing and trusted friendships based on God will be our great reward!

### Genesis Chapter 24 – Isaac & Rebekah “The Father Picks the Bride”

7. Abraham said, ‘The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kin, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, Unto your seed will I give this land: He shall send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife to My son from there.”

Read all of Genesis 24. Abraham sends an unmanned servant who he trusts to travel a long distance to pick the perfect wife for Isaac. (The unnamed servant – always points to the Holy Spirit). He takes gifts and prays specifically for the bride and how to recognize her. Exactly as he has prayed, Rebekah arrives, and takes him home to her family. She agrees to marry Abraham’s son without ever meeting him. (The Spirit of God woos us to accept Jesus before we see Him in person) Once the marriage is agreed upon, the servant offers wonderful gifts. (Just as Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts for our new life in Him.)

67. “...And Isaac took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her...”

## More Old Testament Wedding Patterns!

### Jacob and Rachel Genesis 28-31 “The Wedding Week”

Jacob is sent to his mother's brother Laban in Haran to escape the wrath of his brother Esau and to find a wife that is not a Canaanite woman. He began to work with Laban's flocks and God blessed him. When he saw Rachel, Laban's beautiful younger daughter, he immediately fell in love with her and wanted her for his wife. Jacob made a deal with Laban for Rachel: he would gladly work for Laban 7 years and then marry Rachel. But at the end of the 7 years, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Rachel's older sister Leah, who was plain, and he did not discover it was Leah until after the marriage was consummated. So Jacob agreed to work another 7 years, if he could immediately marry his beloved Rachel. But he had to fulfill first the wedding celebration of 7 days with Leah, before he could take Rachel.

Genesis 29: 27-28 “Fulfill her week, and we will give you this also for the service which you shall serve me yet another 7 years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled Leah's week. And Laban gave Jacob Rachel his daughter to wife, also.”

“Fulfilling the Bridal Week ” is an important pattern in Bible Prophecy. The Church will be hidden in the Bridal Chamber for 7 years (the bridal week) during the 7 year Tribulation.

### Samson and His Pagan Wives

### Judges 14 “The Wedding Week”

Samson was consecrated to the Lord as a Nazarite and never drink or cut his hair and God promised he would have supernatural ability against Israel's enemies. His great strength will be undone by his great weakness for pagan women. To his parents' horror, Samson demanded and married a pagan Philistine wife. During the 7 day wedding feast, Samson arrogantly proposed a riddle to his Philistine guests.

14:12 “And Samson said to them, I will now put forth a riddle to you: if you can certainly declare it to me within the 7 days of the feast, then I will give you 30 sheets and 30 changes of clothes.”

The Philistines threatened his new bride with death, and she wept and begged for days until Samson gave her the answer and she told her kinsmen.

14:17 “And she wept before him the 7 days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.”

Samson's next Philistine wife, Delilah, is worse than the first. For money, she tricks Samson to give her the secret to his strength. When he finally tells her, the Philistines capture him, put out his eyes, and bound him in chains to perform hard labor. Samson is redeemed at the end of his life, but his marriages were evil in every way!

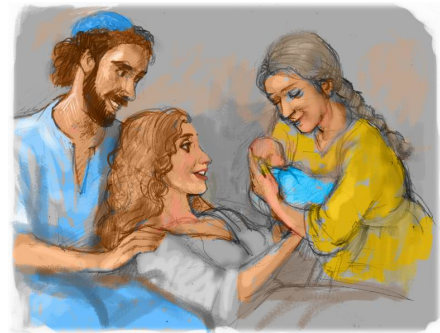
## The Book of Ruth - Wedding Patterns & Bible Prophecy

### "The Kinsman Redeemer"

In just 4 short chapters we find one of the greatest love stories in the Bible – Ruth and Boaz. Ruth, a gentile young and barren widow who returns to Israel with Naomi, her Jewish Mother-in-law. Ruth begins to glean in the harvest fields of Boaz, an honorable, wealthy, and single Israelite. As the kinsman redeemer, Boaz has the right to redeem Ruth in marriage and to claim the land belonging to Naomi's deceased husband and sons. . When Boaz decides to marry Ruth, he performs the role of Kinsman redeemer. Amazing Bible prophecy patterns: Boaz (name = he is coming in strength) a righteous Jew - a picture of Jesus, Jewish Messiah Ruth (her name means Covenant) is a gentile bride – a picture of the Church Naomi (name means pleasant) will get her family's Land back after Boaz and Ruth marry.

Naomi is a picture of Israel, who will get all her promised land back after Jesus raptures the Church as His bride.

Obed (name means servant) - Ruth, barren for 10 years, immediately has a son with Boaz.



There are too many other Bible prophecy patterns in Ruth to cover her. Look for: "Romance in the Throne Room – Redemption in Ruth " at [www.connectedtotheword.com](http://www.connectedtotheword.com)

### The Book of Esther

### "Preparing to Meet the King"

As the King is searching for a new bride, he holds a beauty contest. Esther is rounded up with others and put in the king's harem, awaiting her one night with the king. Esther's purity, and kindness gain the esteem of Hegai, who instructs her in everything that will please the King. She is anointed and appointed for her time with the King: he picks her. Unbeknownst to her, Esther has been chosen "for such a time as this" to stop the evil plans of Haman, who hates and plans to destroy all the Jews, including Esther and Mordecai. She risks her own life to approach the king for the sake of her people.

Her Jewish name Hadassah means "to be hidden." Just as Esther's Jewish identity is hidden from Haman's evil, so the bride of Christ will be hidden during the coming Tribulation. The enemy plans to destroy all the Jews again, before they can receive their Messiah Jesus. Haman, as descendant of Agag, is a perfect picture of the future Islamic anti-christ. Satan wants to kill the Jews, to take their land, their homes and their belongings. But God plans to deliver the Jews again "for such a time as this." He is sending Jesus to redeem all Israel.

Isaiah 26:20

“Come, My People, enter into your chambers,  
and shut your doors about you:  
Hide yourself as it were, for a little moment  
Until the Indignation be overpast.”

“The Bridal Canopy, The Bridal Chamber, & The Bride”

“A Bride Pure and Spotless  
Washed By the Word”

“Protecting the Betrothed”

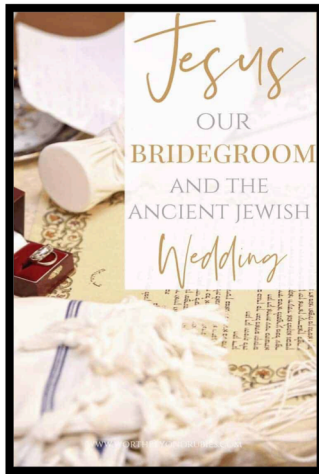
“The Wedding Supper of the Lamb”

“The Chuppah”

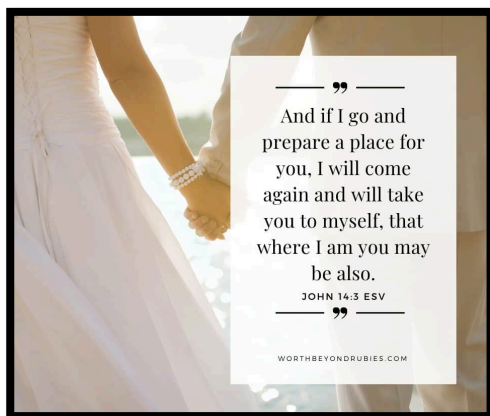
“The Chedar”

## “Chedars, Chuppahs & Chatans”

### “The Bridal Chamber, The Marriage Canopy & The Bridegroom”



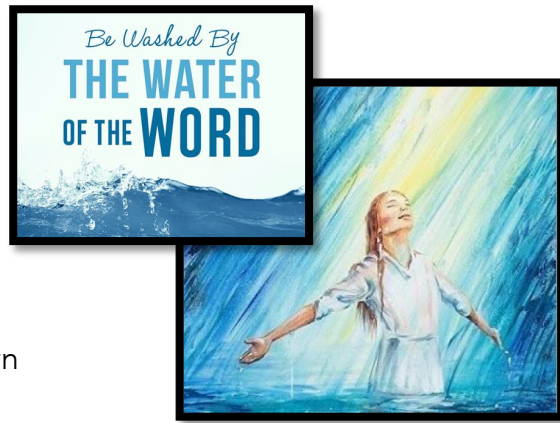
What amazing Bible Prophecy parallels the Old Testament presents for the ancient Jewish Wedding. We know that Jesus is the Bridegroom (**chatan**): He will return to gather His betrothed, The Church, to enter the Father's House. He is coming for a pure bride without spot or wrinkle. When the Father gives the command with the sound of a shofar, the Son will take His bride into the Father's house, and the doors will be shut. There under a wedding canopy, **the Chuppah**, the wedding is consecrated with great celebration and joy. Immediately after, they enter the bridal chamber, **the cheder**, for an intimate 7- day honeymoon, while the bridal party celebrates outside with great feasting and joy. At the end of the 7 days, the bridegroom and his bride leave the bridal chamber, announcing that the bride is now become His wife!



**Matthew 25:6** "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go out to meet Him."

“ A Bride without Spot or Wrinkle  
Is a Bride Washed By the Word “

Ephesians 5:22-32



<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

<sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the savior of the body.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it;

<sup>26</sup>That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

<sup>27</sup>That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

<sup>28</sup>So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself.

<sup>29</sup>For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church:

<sup>30</sup>For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

<sup>31</sup>For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

<sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

“Protecting the Betrothed”

2 Corinthians 11:1 “Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. (Paul)

2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

3. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.



## “The Marriage Supper of the Lamb “

**Revelation 19:7-9** “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true sayings of God.”

By studying the ancient Jewish wedding patterns, we hope to gain an understanding of the heart of God towards The Church and His perfect timing of the forever union between Jesus and His Church forever. Also our study is an amazing picture of God’s strong defence of His Church: “the snatching away just in time in the Rapture,” and safely hidden from danger during the whole 7 Year Tribulation on earth.

**Revelation 3:10** “Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I will also keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth.”

### “The Chuppah – The Wedding Canopy”

**Psalm 19:5** “Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber (**chuppah** and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.

**Isaiah 4:5** “ And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence (**chuppah**)

**Joel 2:16** “Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber (**chedar**), and the bride out of her closet. (**chuppah**) H2646”



### The Chedar - the Bridal Chamber

**Isaiah 26:20** “Come, My people, enter into your chambers, (**chedar** H2315) and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

**Song of Songs 1:4** “Draw me, we will run after thee: the King has brought me into his chambers (**chedar** H2315). We will be glad and rejoice in You, we will remember Your love more than wine: the upright love You.

**Joel 2:16** “Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber (**chedar**), and the bride out of her closet. (**chuppah**) H2646”

## Rejoicing Over the Bride



**Isaiah 62:5** "For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."

**Isaiah 61:10** I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

**John 3:29** "He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

**Revelation 19:7** "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready."

**Matthew 9:15** And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

**Psalms 19:5** "Which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber **chuppah**, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy."

**Deuteronomy 24:5** "When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be liable for any other public duty. He shall be free at home one year to be happy with his wife whom he has taken.

**Song of Songs 2:8-10** "The voice of my beloved! Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, He stands behind our wall, he looks forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.

## Extra Commentaries

The Parable of the 10 Virgins

The Man Without a Wedding Garment - Reimar Schultze

The Wedding Model - Chuck Missler

The Ancient Jewish Wedding - Jamie Lash

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins - The Wedding Parables & Bible Prophecy

"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour." (Matt. 25:1-13)  
'No one knows the day or the hour' is a Jewish idiom for The Feast of Trumpets!

10 virgins – Some translations use the word "maidens" rather than virgins; another uses "bridesmaids." Nonetheless, in the Bible, women are a picture of mankind's relationship with God. "Why virgins or maidens?" you might ask. The answer is that they were unmarried and looking for husbands. In this parable there are 5 wise women and 5 foolish ones. The wise ones trusted God & came to Him on His terms....the equivalent of accepting Jesus' marriage proposal. He is saying, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Lamps – The lamps symbolize what people tell the world that they believe about their relationship with God. –It's their testimony. Matthew 5:15 uses the lamp to explain this, "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

Oil – It's the energy source for the lamps & represents Holy Spirit. He is the power in our Christian faith. A great picture of this in the Bible is the practice of anointing prophets, priests & Kings. Oil was poured on a person's head to seal a special relationship with God.

In Jars The five wise women had oil in jars - what we live in are called our earthen vessels. In 2 Corinthians 4:6-7, Paul says "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." Our lives must reflect the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and producing fruit in our lives...in our jars.

The bridegroom was a long time in coming - Jesus has been gone for about 2000 years. How much longer until He returns to reign and rule.

They fell asleep - Sleep is frequently synonymous with physical death or with spiritual laziness. 1 Thessalonians 5 divides people into 2 groups: into those who are of the day awake, and those who are of the night, drunken, and asleep.

At midnight - Jesus will return when the world is in its darkest desperate state. In Revelation we read a time when the sun and moon are darkened and the stars fall from the sky. The midnight hour is the prophetic time of Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming!

The wedding banquet - It's the one we are all looking forward to in Revelation 20 - after the Tribulation. . That will be a glorious day when His bride -all of us who have entrusted ourselves to Him- will be joined with Jesus for eternity.

The door was shut - Just like the door to the ark was shut in the chapter before. Genesis 2:36-41. Noah preached for 100 years and when the ark was completed every one laughed. Only Noah and his family entered into safety and then God shut the door for 7 days. When the rains came, it was too late for a change of heart

It's also similar to the parable of the great supper where the master (God, the Father) sent invitations to His people (the Jews) and even messengers into the street (to the Gentiles). Eventually, He had everyone come to see the supper (wedding banquet), but only those who willingly accepted His invitation were participants. The rest were on-lookers. That will be a sad time when people will realize that they refused the invitation for eternal life as the cherished bride of our Lord Jesus.

"I don't know you" - When it's high time to be awakened from "sleep" at the resurrection, those who have the Holy Spirit -the oil- will enter the grand reception. Those who didn't have the oil went looking for some, but the time for deciding their destiny was over. Remember the story of Lazarus (in Luke 16:19-31) where it was impossible for the rich man to cross over the great chasm after death? There will be some who will be rejoicing on that day. But the others will hear those most dreaded words when Jesus will say, "I don't know you."

## The Man without the Wedding Garment      By Reimar Schultze

*"When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there was a man which had not a wedding garment: And he said to him, Friend, how came you in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."*—Matthew 22:11-14

Who will be chosen to partake of the Great Marriage Feast of the Lamb? Surely all people, Christian or not, should want to know. No event in the past or future will eclipse this celebration. To be chosen to join it by our heavenly Father is the highest honor that can be conferred on any human. Not being chosen will bring us the greatest misery conceivable.

*"A king made a marriage feast for his son and invited those who were bidden,"* so begins our parable (Matt. 22:1). The king represents God the Father; the son represents the Lord Jesus. The Father prepared the wedding feast for the Son. Of course this begs the question: Who then is the bride? The Bride-elect, the Bible infers here, are the Jews, the Covenant people of God. They were the first to be invited through servants whom God sent. But the parable continues to say that some of the 'elect' made light of the invitation, others ignored it, and the rest of them killed the servants, so the king destroyed their city. This refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD under the Roman general Titus Flavius Vespasian, soon to be the new emperor. C. H. Spurgeon comments on this text. "The destruction of Jerusalem was more terrible than anything the world has ever witnessed either before or since" (Commentary on Matthew page 412).

The parable continues: then the king sent other servants to invite anyone who wanted to come to the wedding. These are the new called ones, the new elect, and *"the wedding was furnished with guests (Vs. 10)*. Many were called or invited, but one man arrived without his "wedding garment," and was thrown out of the celebration. This man is a type of the many who are called, but are not chosen. The man's destiny hinged on one single item: the wearing of a "wedding garment."

What is the "wedding garment" and where does it come from? Where did the other guests get theirs? Ancient tradition held that the King provided garments for his guests so they would always appear before him properly attired. In Genesis 45:22, Pharaoh had Joseph provide clothing for his brothers so that they could later enter Pharaoh's presence. In the same way, the host of a wedding furnished the invited guests with "wedding garments." To come to the celebration incorrectly dressed was a terrible insult to the host and invoked the wrath of the king.

The wedding garment represents the righteousness of Christ. It is a garment of faith, love, holiness and separation from the world. It is the garment of identification. The wedding garment cannot be purchased. We cannot purchase our salvation by good deeds or works. Only heaven can outfit us to become the Bride of Christ to stand before the Throne.

Please understand that all the invited ones are the "called ones" who had received a wedding garment from the king. God never calls anyone to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb without supplying the wedding garment. It must be worn from the moment of our espousal to Jesus until the great Marriage Feast. What is "espousal?" Under Mosaic law, espousal was a legal ceremony as binding as marriage: a time of separation and dedication until the 2nd wedding ceremony took place.... no more flirting, no other lovers, no playing in the world. If an espoused woman was caught with another man, she was stoned to death. (Deut. 27:23, 24).

When you are born-again, you receive a new garment of righteousness that identifies you with Jesus & separates you from the rest of the world. You enter into a first-love, bridal contract with Him. You then cast off the fleshly garments of the old man with all of its sins, worldly habits, lusts and carnal tendencies. *"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof"* (Rom. 13:14). Your action accompanies your faith.

Adam and Eve wore garments of light. God created them in His image, and God is light (1 John 1:5). They had continual fellowship with God until they disobeyed, when they lost their garments of light and saw they were naked. But Jesus came to restore us to being children of light. Put on the Lord Jesus! Romans 13:12 says, *"Put on the armor of light."* This is the same as putting on the wedding garment Jesus gave you. As you wear it, you are in a bridal (espousal) relationship. If you put it off, your relationship with Jesus is hindered and without real change of heart, could be broken.

The parable of the 10 virgins points to these themes. In Matthew 25 as soon as we are converted we receive light. Light is synonymous with wedding garments. The light the virgins received here at the beginning of their journey was divine light. But they were expected to keep their lights burning just as the wedding guest was expected to keep his wedding garment on. They didn't know when they would go in to the feast, so they were to be ready.

The parable of the sower says of the seed, *"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience"* (Luke 8:15). Only the seed that is kept brings forth fruit. It is one thing to receive something, it is quite another thing **TO KEEP IT**. Don't be fooled into thinking that because you received Christ's wedding garment at your new birth it will get you to heaven. Don't ever think that you can fold it up and put it in a drawer and still be saved. If you don't keep what the Lord Jesus has given you and allow it to grow, you will be in serious trouble someday. You will hear the same words that the man without the garment heard, *"Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"*

Why many Christians come close to losing their wedding garments? They have never gained a true fear of God. Why do so many have spots, wrinkles and blemishes on their garments? They are ignorant of God's holiness, so do not fear Him. Solomon said, *"By the fear of the lord, men depart from evil"* (Pro. 16:16).. The fear of the Lord is a **PUSHER**; it pushes us away from dangerous hidden icebergs of life so we can make it safely to the harbor of rest. The fear of the Lord is a mighty motivating force. A wonderful fear of the Lord will keep you from yielding to manifold temptations.

of pusher  
KEEPER

## The Wedding Model – Chuck Missler

In this second article in our series on the Rapture, we will explore another reason why we favor a "pre-tribulation" view of the *Harz*, the "snatching up" of the Church.

All through the Gospels, Jesus relied on the ancient Jewish wedding pattern for many of His parables,<sup>1</sup> climaxing in His promise in the Upper Room in John 14 (as reviewed in our previous article). Many of us miss the full import of these allusions if we aren't familiar with the model of ancient Jewish wedding practices.

### Jewish Wedding

The first step, the Ketubah, or Betrothal,<sup>2</sup> was the establishment of the marriage covenant, usually when the prospective bridegroom took the initiative<sup>3</sup> and negotiated the price (mohair) he must pay to purchase her.<sup>4</sup>

Once the bridegroom paid the purchase price, the marriage covenant was established, and the young man and woman were regarded as husband and wife.<sup>5</sup> From that moment on, the bride was declared to be consecrated or sanctified - set apart - exclusively for her bridegroom.<sup>6</sup> As a symbol of the covenant relationship that had been established, the groom and bride drank from a cup of wine over which the betrothal had been pronounced.<sup>7</sup>

After the marriage covenant was established, the groom left his bride at her home and returned to his father's house, where he remained separated from his bride for approximately 12 months.<sup>8</sup> This afforded the bride time to gather her trousseau and prepare for married life.<sup>9</sup>

During this period of separation, the groom prepared a dwelling place in his father's house to which he would later bring his bride. At the end of the period of separation, the bridegroom came - usually at night - to take his bride to live with him. The groom, the best man, and other male escorts left the father's house and conducted a torch-light procession to the home of the bride.<sup>10</sup> Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the time of his coming.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the groom's arrival was preceded by a shout,<sup>12</sup> which announced her imminent departure to be gathered with him.

After the groom received his bride, together with her female attendants, the enlarged wedding party returned from the bride's home to the groom's father's house,<sup>13</sup> where the wedding guests had assembled.

Shortly after their arrival, the bride and groom were escorted by the other members of the wedding party to the bridal chamber (*huppah*). Prior to entering the chamber, the bride remained veiled so that no one could see her face.<sup>14</sup> While the groomsmen and bridesmaids waited outside, the bride and groom entered the bridal chamber alone. There, in the privacy of that place, they entered into physical union for the first time, thereby consummating the marriage that had been covenanted approximately one year earlier.<sup>15</sup>

After the marriage was consummated, the groom came out of the bridal chamber and announced the consummation of the marriage to the members of the wedding party waiting outside.<sup>16</sup> Then, as the groom went back to his bride in the chamber, the members of the wedding party returned to the wedding guests and announced the consummation of the marriage.<sup>17</sup>



Upon receiving the good news, the wedding guests remained in the groom's father's house for the next seven days, celebrating with a great wedding feast.<sup>18</sup>

During the seven days of the wedding feast, the bride and groom remained hidden in the bridal chamber<sup>19</sup> (Cf. Genesis 29:21-23, 27-28) for the seven days of the huppah.<sup>20</sup> Afterwards, the groom came out of hiding, bringing his bride with him, but with her veil removed so that everyone could see her.

## The Ultimate Bride

The New Testament portrays the Church as the Bride of Christ in Ephesians 5:22-33 (Paul even quotes Genesis 2:24 as the union at the Parousia of the Bridegroom in v.31!); cf. Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; James 4:4. In the opening verses of John 14, the marriage covenant is confirmed.<sup>21</sup> Paul continually reminds us of the purchase price<sup>22</sup> and the covenant<sup>23</sup> by which we, the Bride, are set apart, or sanctified.<sup>24</sup>

## Ecclesiology vs. Eschatology

It is this distinctive nature of the Church that is often overlooked by students of prophecy: it is more a matter of ecclesiology than eschatology.

One thing that seems to highlight this distinctiveness is the strange remark Jesus made regarding John the Baptist:

*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. -Matthew 11:11*

What does that mean? Jesus goes on to explain,

*For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. - Matthew 11:13*

It is John the Baptist that closes the Old Testament, not Malachi.<sup>25</sup> A profound distinction appears to be drawn between the saints of the Old Testament and those of the New.

One of the challenges in fully appreciating Paul's epistles is the need to understand the staggering and distinctive advantages afforded the Church, in contrast to those of the Old Testament saints.<sup>26</sup> And it is this role as the Bride of the Bridegroom that is emphasized in the parables and in the Book of Revelation.<sup>27</sup>

## The Departure of the Bridegroom

The Bridegroom has departed, and His return to gather His Bride is imminent.<sup>28</sup> He has gone to prepare a place for you and me. (He has been at it for 2,000 years! It must be a spectacular abode!)

This very doctrine of "imminence" is taught throughout the New Testament and is a cornerstone of the "pre-tribulational" view: there is no event which is a prerequisite condition for His gathering of His Bride.

## The Great Tribulation

There are those who believe the Church will go through the Great Tribulation. In exploring this issue, it is essential to distinguish between persecution, which clearly has been the lot of the Church for 19 centuries, and "the Great Tribulation" of eschatological significance. The persecution - and tribulation - of the Church was clearly promised to us:

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. -John 16:33*

The source of this tribulation is the world and, of course, Satan. However, "the Great Tribulation" of eschatological significance is quite another matter.

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. -Matthew 24:21*

The context here is clearly Israel.<sup>29</sup> Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament:

*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book -Daniel 12:1*

Note that "thy people will be delivered": the focus of the "Great Tribulation" is Israel. That is why it is called "the time of Jacob's Trouble":

*Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. -Jeremiah 30:7*

Jesus (in the Old Testament) explains:

*I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly. <sup>30</sup> -Hosea 5:15*

To "return," He must have left His place! The offence referred to is singular and specific: their rejection of Him. In "their affliction" they will ultimately repent and He will respond.<sup>31</sup>

The Great Tribulation also involves more than the wrath of the world or the wrath of Satan: it involves the indignation and wrath of God. <sup>32</sup> In contrast, the Church has been promised:

*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, -1 Thessalonians 5:9*

*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. - Romans 5:9*

And, specifically,

*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour [time] of temptation [trial], which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. - Revelation 3:10*

Peter also emphasizes,

*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: -2 Peter 2:9*

Here, Peter is using the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah "as an example,"<sup>33</sup> as Jesus also did,<sup>34</sup> in which the prior removal of Lot was a precondition before the angels could do their work.<sup>35</sup>

A complete study of this issue involves careful and diligent study of both the Church (ecclesiology) as well as the eschatology (end time aspects) of the Great Tribulation, which, of course, far exceeds the focus of this brief review. It requires precise definitions of the terms used, and great care to understand how each of the elements of the revealed truth relate to each other.

But the fundamental doctrine of imminence has to be forfeited with any view that requires the Great Tribulation - or any other precedent event - to occur prior to the Rapture.

*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. -Luke 21:36*

# *The Ancient Jewish Wedding*

*...and the Return of Messiah  
for His Bride*

**by Jamie Lash**



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# The Ancient Jewish Wedding

The ancient Jewish wedding has special relevance for the days in which we live because these are the days immediately preceding the return of the Messiah Yeshua for His bride. When He comes in the clouds to take us away with Him, He will not come as a carpenter, nor as a rabbi, teacher, shepherd, nor even a high priest. He is coming again as a Bridegroom/King. At this very moment, His heart is longing for the day when He will gather His bride unto Himself. This union has been in the heart and plan of God from the beginning of time.

The Bible chronicles the love relationship between God and His people. It tells us of the marriage of God to Israel and the marriage covenant that He kept, even though His people did not (Jeremiah 31:32). It also tells us of a new marriage covenant for both Jews and non-Jews. The entire Bible is actually a marriage covenant, both "Old" and "New." When seen in this light, the need to understand Jewish marriage customs at the time of Yeshua comes into focus.

Our Messiah followed the steps of a Jewish bridegroom in taking a bride for Himself. Much has been lost to the body of believers by not seeing Jesus in His original Jewish context. The ancient Jewish wedding customs are a case in point. As you learn of these customs, you will sense an added richness in your relationship with the One whom your soul loves. The Apostle Paul gave beautiful expression to the richness and anointing in the Jewish root of belief in Yeshua as Messiah in Romans 11:17. This richness is part of your adorning as Messiah's bride. One of our goals as the coming of our Bridegroom draws near should be to adorn ourselves with the Jewish jewels of God's Word. Let the adorning begin, and let Isaiah 61:10 be our confession:

*"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."*

## A Bridal Relationship

Two verses in the New Covenant Scriptures highlight the bridal relationship that Yeshua has with the individual believer. The first is 2 Corinthians 11:2. The Apostle Paul speaks in this verse to all believers, both women and men: *"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to the Messiah."* Betrothed means engaged. In some way, believers, both male and female, are spiritually engaged to a bridegroom. We are to be like virgins, spiritually, as we relate to this "husband."

Paul continues with the analogy in Romans 7:4: *"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Messiah, that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."* We are married to One who has been raised from the dead. That One is Yeshua, the Son of God, the Messiah. The purpose of our union is to bear fruit to God . . . fruit in terms of souls (Proverbs 11:30), works that glorify God (Ephesians 2:10), as well as the fruit of the Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit) (Galatians 5:22).

In the fifth chapter of the book of Ephesians, Paul speaks again concerning the relationship between Messiah and His body, using a bridal analogy: *"Wives should submit to their husbands as they do to the Lord; because the husband is head of the wife, just as the Messiah, as head of the Messianic Community, is himself the one who keeps the body safe . . . As for husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah loved the Messianic Community, indeed gave himself up on its behalf, in order to set it apart for God, making it clean through immersion in the mikveh, so to speak in order to present the Messianic Community to himself as a bride to be proud of, without a spot, wrinkle or any such thing but holy and without defect."* The passage concludes with: *"There is profound truth hidden here, which I say concerns the Messiah and the Messianic Community."* (JNT)

The most intimate of human relationships is the marriage relationship. As such, it is a picture of the intimacy that the individual believer can have with God. Captured by love, cleansed by blood, transformed by His Spirit, Messiah's bride will one day stand before Him without spot or wrinkle. As the bridegroom says in the Song of Songs: *"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee"* (Song 4:7). He is the One who accomplishes this work in His bride. We can be very thankful for that! As we progress through the steps of the ancient Jewish wedding, we'll find out some more about the sanctification of the bride. Let's begin at the beginning, now, with the selection of the bride.

***"I have betrothed you  
to one husband..."***  
**2 Corinthians 11:2**



## **Selection of the Bride**

In ancient Israel, brides were usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom. He would send his most trusted servant to search for a bride for his son. We see in the book of Genesis, for example, that Abraham sent his most trusted servant Eliezer (whose name means "God's helper") to find a wife for his son Isaac (Genesis 24:2-9). The servant found Rebekah, who became the very first Jewish bride. Eliezer was perhaps the forerunner of what later became known as the *shadkhan* or matchmaker.

The bridegroom's father would, of course, act in his son's best interest in choosing a bride. Perhaps, if the son was old enough, they would confer together. In either case, the bridegroom selected the bride (not vice-versa). A verse from the New Covenant elevates this custom to a spiritual level: *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain . . ."* (John 15:16). We have been chosen to be part of Messiah's bride. If you are gentile by birth, you have been chosen once. If you are Jewish, you have been chosen twice! Both are recipients of the same love.

Many times the bride had not seen her husband-to-be, but had found out about him through the servant. This is the case with the bride of Messiah. We have not seen Yeshua, but God's servant, the Holy

Spirit, has revealed Him to us. We love our Bridegroom, sight unseen as expressed in 1 Peter 1:8: *“Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. . .”* We see Yeshua now through eyes of faith. One day we will see him face to face.

In Matthew 22:2-3 we read about a king who prepared a marriage for his son and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, but they would not come. The same thing happens in the spiritual realm. It is called resisting the Holy Spirit. As the servant of God, the Holy Spirit goes out into the highways and byways seeking a bride for God’s Son. Many resist Him, but not all. As I meditated on this truth one day many years ago when we lived on the beach in Ft. Lauderdale, a car drove up into our driveway. A woman got out, saw me in my beach chair on the upper deck, and asked, “Is this Love Song to the Messiah?” I said it was (our ministry at that time was based in our home). She continued, “I’m Jewish and I’m beginning to believe that perhaps Jesus really is the Messiah, and I was wondering if anyone here could tell me about that.” I invited her in, (The Holy Spirit had already extended the invitation!) and she became a part of the bride of Messiah.

That was in the 1980’s. Since that time the Ruach HaKodesh has begun moving dramatically among God’s ancient people. We are seeing the veil of blindness (Romans 11:25) replaced by a bridal veil almost weekly. A number of the new bridal souls are over seventy years of age. Glory to God!

Yeshua as a Jewish bridegroom always initiates the love. He selects us; we don’t select Him. Scripture tells that *“We love Him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19)*. Most of us, including myself, were wooed and pursued by the Lord for quite a while before we even began to acknowledge His presence or reach out to Him. His choosing us is indeed a miracle. Why would the King of kings and Lord of lords choose me? This is what the Shulamite maiden asks in the Song of Songs 2:1 when she says: *“I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.”* (In other words, I’m just a common wildflower. What does He see in me?) The King’s answer is: *“Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters” (Song 2:2)*.

He has chosen us because He loves us.

He loves us because He has chosen to.

His selection of us is mysterious, gracious and wonderful!

## The Bride Price

Brides in Bible times were purchased. A bride price or *mohar* was paid for a bride. We read in Deuteronomy 24:1 that a man “took” or “acquired” a wife. The term used for this in Hebrew is *kichah*, a business term. The price was paid to the father of the bride, both to compensate him for the loss of a worker in his household and to show how much the bridegroom loved and valued the bride. Virgins brought double the price of widows or divorced women. If the going rate for a bride was two camels, fifty shekels of silver, a tent or whatever, the bridegroom could pay more than was required if he chose to. Sometimes the bride price did not include money or goods. In the case of Jacob and Rachel, the bride price was service to Rachel’s father Laban. We read in Genesis about the price that Jacob paid for his bride: *“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her” (Genesis 29:20)*.

Despite the obvious element of romance seen in the story of Jacob and Rachel, brides were considered possessions in ancient Israel. The word for wife, *be’ulah*, literally means the “owned one.” Husband or *ba’al* means “owner” or “master.” *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s,”* is an exhortation found in the tenth commandment (Exodus 20:17).

Since a wife was purchased, she belonged to her husband.

Although this may seem cruel and unjust in today’s culture and way of thinking, it was actually a step above what was happening in the pagan world at that time. There was no value placed on wives. If a man wanted a wife, he simply took her to his house, had intercourse with her and she became his wife. God introduced sanctity and permanence into the marriage relationship, and the *mohar* or bride price was part



of raising a standard of righteousness. Women had value. They were to be cherished. This important truth is beautifully expressed by Maurice Lamm in his book, **The Jewish Way in Love and Marriage**, “Before the revelation at Sinai, a man would meet a woman on the street and if both desired marriage, he would bring her into his home and have intercourse privately (without the testimony of witnesses) and she would become his wife. When the Torah was given, the Jews were instructed that in order to marry a woman, the man should ‘acquire her’ in the presence of witnesses and then she would become his wife. And as soon as she is acquired and becomes betrothed, even though she has not cohabited and did not even enter the groom’s home, she is a married woman. Anyone, other than her husband, who cohabits with her, is guilty [and merits] capital punishment. If he wishes to separate from her, he requires a divorce.”

There are seven different verses in the Bible which say: “...And when a man taketh a wife...” (KJV). From these and other verses, such as Jeremiah 31:22, “... a woman shall encompass a man,” a custom developed in the ancient Jewish wedding called the “seven circuits.” The bride circled her bridegroom seven times, showing her submission to him, her protection of him, her belonging to him, and his belonging to her. This custom is still part of many Jewish weddings today.

The concept of being purchased and belonging to another has a powerful spiritual application. We, as the bride of Messiah, have also been purchased. A very high *mohar* was paid for us – the blood of Yeshua Himself. The Messiah wrestled with that price in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was as if He were asking that fateful night, “Father, do you know what they’re asking for her?” Our Bridegroom chose to pay the very high price because of the “*joy set before him*,” the joy of seeing each one of us redeemed, whole, new creations, a pure, spotless bride. We were the joy set before Yeshua in the Garden.

The New Covenant mentions our *mohar* a number of times. In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read: “*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*” Ephesians 1:14 speaks of the “*redemption of the purchased possession*” referring to the bride of Messiah.

1 Corinthians 7:23 states that since we are bought with a price, we should not become slaves of men. Our *mohar* is also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “*Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*” In Luke 22:19-20, Yeshua mentions the bride price at His last Passover seder on earth, immediately before He paid the price in full: “*And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you... This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’*” The following scripture is an exhortation to leaders in the body of Messiah: “*Watch out for yourselves, and for all the flock in which the Ruach HaKodesh has placed you as leaders, to shepherd God’s Messianic Community, which he won for himself at the cost of his own Son’s blood*” (Acts 20:28 JNT).

Yielding to and accepting the fact that we no longer belong to ourselves because we have been “*bought with a price*” is a key to entering into the abundant life that our Bridegroom has for us. When we give Him all of us, He freely gives us all of Him. How can we withhold anything from Him when the high price He paid for us shows us how valuable we are to Him?

When Yeshua died on the tree, paying the *mohar* for His bride, He said: “*It is finished!*” (John 19:30). The word that He spoke as His final thought is from the Hebrew root *ka’lal* which means to complete, make perfect or finish. It is the same root of the word for bride: *kallah*. Could Yeshua’s last words on the cross have had bridal overtones? Was His bride His last thought as He paid the bride price for her?

We were on His heart, why not on His lips?

## **Betrothal/Ketubah**

The ancient Jewish marriage ceremony consisted of two main parts, beginning with betrothal or engagement. The Hebrew word for betrothal is *erusin*. Another word, *kidushin*, was also used to describe this step in the marriage process. *Kidushin* literally means sanctification or holiness with the idea of being

set apart. It comes from the Hebrew word for holy, *kadosh*. The God of the Hebrews elevated marriage to a holy state and introduced Himself as a part of the relationship. This was the beginning of the concept of “holy matrimony.” The word for the betrothed woman was also related to the word holy: a bride was *m’kudeshet*.

Betrothal occurred up to twelve months before the actual wedding and involved covenant (“*brit*” in Hebrew). It was like our engagement today, but with a much greater sense of commitment because of the covenant entered into. Covenant in Bible times was serious, final, sealed in blood, and legally binding. Covenants could not be easily broken. Once a couple entered into covenant at betrothal, they were legally married in all aspects except for the physical consummation of the marriage. If joint checking accounts had existed in ancient times, the couple could have had one.

At the betrothal ceremony, a marriage contract or *ketubah* was presented to the father of the bride. This contract was actually a covenant which stipulated the bride price and other provisions that the bridegroom was prepared to make for his bride. Before the *ketubah* was introduced, women had no rights, no security, no guarantee of protection and provision. The *ketubah* as a covenantal document elevated women to a new status in society. In it, the bridegroom promised to work for honor, support and maintain his bride in truth, provide her food, clothing and necessities, and live together with her as husband and wife. The *ketubah* is still very much a part of Jewish weddings today. Many times it is read publicly and serves as an interlude between the prenuptial or betrothal ceremony of *erusin* and the nuptial ceremony of *nisuin*. A bride cherishes her *ketubah* both for its meaning and beauty.

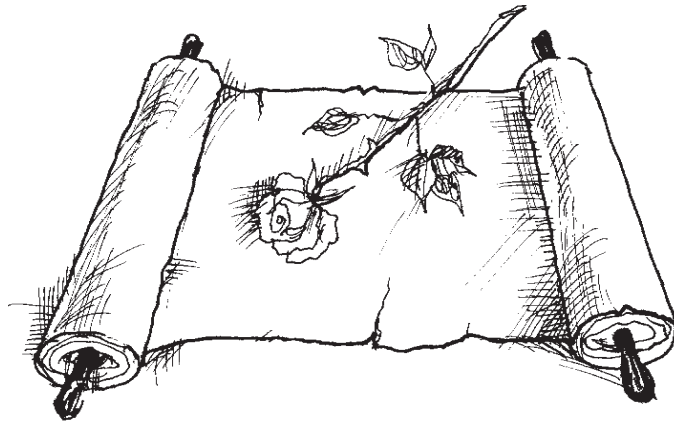
Just as the *ketubah* was the inalienable right of the bride, the New Testament, our *ketubah*, contains promises for us from our soon coming Bridegroom. So many times people look at the Bible as a big book of “don’ts.” It is not that at all. The New Covenant is a marriage contract that shows us all we are entitled to as part of Yeshua’s bride. All the promises in this Book, (which is actually a love letter to the bride), are for us to receive by faith. For example, in Matthew 6:28-30 our Heavenly Bridegroom says to us: “*So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*” Our Bridegroom promises to clothe us, feed us, provide shelter for us, and live with us as husband and wife. He is in covenant with us. Our *ketubah* testifies to this.

We read in Jeremiah 31:31-34 of the New *Ketubah* (Covenant) that God promised to make with His people Israel: “*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*”

This *ketubah* or marriage contract was first promised to the house of Israel, and later opened up to “*whosoever will.*” This meant that non-Jews who at one time were strangers to God’s covenants and promises could enter in and fully partake of His blessings, including the blessings of the New (“marriage”) Covenant. The New Covenant is built on even better promises than the one God gave the Jewish people at Mt. Sinai according to Hebrews 8:6. Through this covenant, our Bridegroom promises to take God’s law from the outside and place it on the inside so that we might “*know Him.*” The Hebrew word “to know” used here is *yada*. It speaks of intimacy of relationship in the deepest sense. This is the same Hebrew word used for sexual intercourse in the Scriptures, i.e. “*And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch*” (Genesis 4:17). Such intimacy with a Holy God is available to all who enter into the New Covenant and accept His *Ketubah*. That includes you!

**“I will put My law in their minds,  
and write it on their hearts . . . ”**

**Jeremiah 31:33**



## **The Bride's Consent**

Although a bride was selected for a bridegroom, the prospective girl had some say in responding to a proposed marriage contract. We see this in the example of Rebekah in Genesis 24:57-58. After Abraham's servant's encounter with her at the well, she brought Eliezer to her father's house where they discussed the proposed marriage between Rebekah and Abraham's son, Isaac. The following morning, they called Rebekah and said to her, *“Will you go with this man?”* She said, *“I will go.”* Rebekah gave her consent – her “I do.” This willing consent in Hebrew is *daat*. Some insight into Jewish thought on the bride's consent is given to us by Eugene Mihaly in an article entitled “The Jewish View of Marriage”: “Judaism teaches that marriage can take place only by mutual consent. In an age when child marriage was the common practice, the sages ordained: ‘It is forbidden for a man to betroth his minor daughter until she attains her majority and says, *I love this man.*’ “

The same occurs in our spiritual betrothal to Yeshua HaMashiach. God never forces anyone to say “I do” to His Son Yeshua. He created us with a free will. He is glorified when we choose to do things His way and return the love that He so lavishly bestows upon us. In Romans 10:9-10, we read about the New Covenant “I do:” *“...If you confess with your mouth the Lord Yeshua, the Messiah, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.”* We believe with our heart and confess with our lips when we say, “Yes!” to Yeshua.

This is what happened to me on July 25, 1973. Kneeling by my bed in Bethpage, New York, I said to God: “I do believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. (At that time I called Him Jesus.)

I do believe that You raised Him from the dead.  
I do repent of all my sin and desire to turn from it.  
I do give You my heart and my whole life.  
I do trust You with my future.  
I do believe that Yeshua's death atoned for my sin.  
I do receive His total forgiveness and the gift of eternal life.  
I do receive Your love and my salvation today.”

Amen.

I was in an intimate place – my bedroom – when I prayed that prayer. My Jewish husband was sit-

ting on the edge of the bed watching me. There was no huppah or wedding canopy over me, but I felt as if there was! Do you cry at weddings? I cried at this one – tears of great joy – as I became part of the bride of Messiah.

If you've never prayed to receive Yeshua, don't delay. His love is reaching out to you. Say "I do" and be eternally blessed.



**“For with the heart one believes  
to righteousness . . .”  
Romans 10:10**

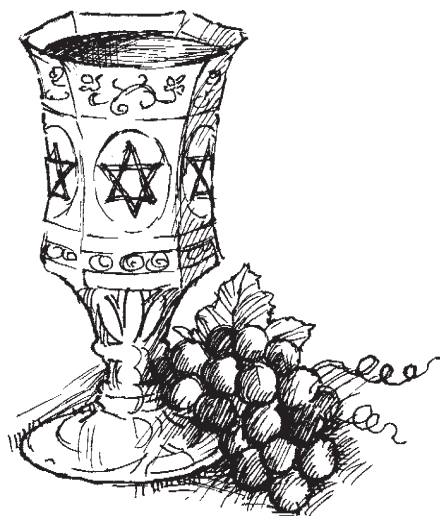
## **Cup of the Covenant**

When the terms of the *ketubah* were accepted (at our 25th anniversary in Jerusalem, a white handkerchief was held up by Neil and the rabbi to indicate the bridegroom's acceptance of all the unilateral obligations of the *ketubah*), a cup of wine was shared to seal the marriage covenant. The Hebrew word for bridegroom, *hatan*, means “one who enters into covenant.” Wine has been blessed for over 2,000 years in the same manner whenever a covenant was entered into, by saying: “*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha olam borey pre hagafen.*” (Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.) The blessing of this cup of wine was called *Birkat Erusin*. The bride and groom shared the same cup, symbolizing the shared life that would be theirs. A second cup of wine would be shared many months later. Wine in Judaism has always symbolized joy. Marriage in Jewish thought is the highest source of joy on earth. Wine also symbolized blood. The marriage covenant is a blood covenant in the eyes of God. Two lives become one in a lifelong commitment.

The cup that Yeshua took at His last Passover seder on earth was the cup of the New Marriage Covenant with His bride. We read in Luke 22:20: “*Likewise He also took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new testament (covenant) in My blood, which is shed for you.*” Yeshua and His disciples were celebrating the anniversary of God's wedding to Israel (the Exodus). He was telling them that the New Marriage Covenant (the one prophesied in Jeremiah 31) would be sealed with His blood. Yeshua and His disciples drank from a common cup in an upper room in Jerusalem. They became one as they drank wine together.

When we partake of that cup at the Lord's Seder (Communion) we remember our Heavenly Bridegroom, the *mohar* paid for us, and our covenantal relationship with Yeshua. Just as two cups of wine were used as part of the ancient Jewish wedding, (the second at the actual hometaking of the bride), Messiah's bride will one day soon drink a cup with Yeshua in person at the second part of our marriage ceremony. Yeshua mentioned this cup in Matthew 26:29 when He said: “*I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.*” Until that day, we have the communion cup to remind us of our covenant with our Heavenly Bridegroom. We are to remember His love more than wine . . . (Song of Songs 1:4). It is more precious than anything else this world has to offer.

**“...He took  
the cup after  
supper...”  
Luke 22:20**



## **Gifts for the Bride**

Betrothal included the giving of gifts by the bridegroom to his bride. Abraham’s servant Eliezer brought ten camels laden with gifts when he went to find a bride for his master’s son: “*Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah . . .*” (Genesis 24:53). (When Rebekah had volunteered to water the ten camels, she had no idea that the camels and their precious cargo would soon be hers, nor that one of these camels would carry her to her bridegroom.)

Many times a bridegroom gave a coin or other object of value to his betrothed bride – something that would help her remember him while they were apart. Eventually the customary gift became a ring. The giving of the ring to the bride constituted the main feature of *erusin* (betrothal). As the bridegroom placed the ring on the bride’s index finger he recited the traditional Jewish espousal formula: “*Ha-rey at m’kudeshet lib’taba’at zu k’dat Moshe v’Yisrael.*” The most ancient wedding ceremonies contained only the phrase: “*Ha-rey at m’kudeshet li*” (Be thou consecrated unto me.) The phrase: “*K’dat Moshe v’Yisrael*” (according to the law of Moses and Israel) was added later. And “*b’taba’at zu*” (by means of this ring) was added still later.

The real focus of the gift giving was not the gift, but the giver. The object of value, whether a ring, coin or whatever, made the bride think about her bridegroom. Today young men usually give their fiancées a diamond engagement ring. When the young woman looks at the ring she is reminded of the one who gave her the ring. In much the same way, God’s Holy Spirit is our spiritual engagement ring who leads us to focus on our Heavenly Bridegroom. He doesn’t call attention to Himself, but rather to the One who purchased us. Just as a diamond is many faceted, so is the Holy Spirit. As a living bridal gift, He helps to keep our eyes on our soon-coming, many-faceted Bridegroom.

The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift that Yeshua has given to His Bride. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 tells us that the Lord has given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit – a token of our bridal inheritance. Through Him we receive many gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 mentions some of them: “*For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*”

What bride would say to a bridegroom who comes to her with a gift: “Oh, you shouldn’t have done that! You know you can’t afford that. Why did you get me that gift?!” And yet, the bride of Messiah does this with our Heavenly Bridegroom. So many of us don’t know how to receive from Him!! Today is the day to begin to change. Our God is a giver. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). When

we receive gifts from God, we give Him pleasure. His gifts, given through the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), are meant to be shared (not consumed on our own lusts). If we are willing to be vessels through which the bridal gifts flow out to touch the lives of others, God will give us as much as we can receive.

God, the Great Giver, is looking for receivers! Do you desire to become one? Pray with me right now: “Dear Heavenly Father – It is easy for me to give, but I have a difficult time receiving. Help me today to see that every good and perfect gift comes from You and to receive from others with knowledge of this truth. I want to receive all that you have for me, every bridal gift with which You want to bless me. Thank you for changing my life, in Yeshua’s name. Amen.”

Some more gifts that Messiah’s bride receives include: eternal life, forgiveness of sins, prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, mercy (Romans 12), and faith. And there are even more gifts for the bride as she learns more about her Heavenly Bridegroom from God’s servant, the Holy Spirit.

Something to ponder: the gifts of the Holy Spirit are precious jewels that adorn Messiah’s bride.

## Mikvah

Brides in ancient Israel as well as brides in Israel today experience a *mikvah* prior to their wedding. The word *mikvah* means a pool of living water used for ritual purification. Jewish brides to this day continue to go to the *mikvah* for a *tevilah* or ritual immersion in water as part of their physical and spiritual preparation for the wedding ceremony. This ancient Jewish custom represents a separation from an old life to a new life – from life as a single woman to life as a married woman. It also symbolizes a change in status and authority; a woman comes out from under the authority of her father to the authority of her husband.

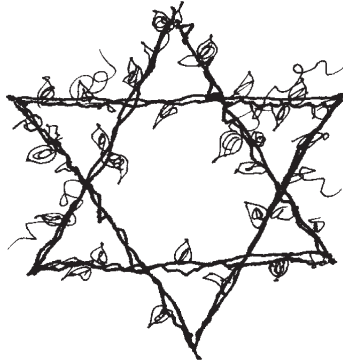
In Matthew chapter 3, people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and the surrounding region came to John for immersion (*tevilah*) by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. They were coming under the authority of John’s teaching as they did this. But John, upon seeing Yeshua coming toward Him, pointed out to the people that they should come under His authority because He was “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). John was the “*friend of the bridegroom*” (John 3:27-29). Yeshua was the Bridegroom. John wanted the bride to know to whom she should rightfully submit.

Immersion in the *mikvah* in traditional Jewish understanding is a religious ceremony imbued with profound spiritual symbolism. God is praised as the One who purifies His people, the One who sanctifies them through His commandments and has commanded them regarding immersion. In commenting on the *mikvah*, Rabbi Akiva, a famous first century rabbi, said: “May you be praised, O Israel: Before whom are you purifying yourselves? Who purifies you? Your Father in Heaven... Just as the mikvah purifies the impure, so does the Holy One, Blessed be He, purify Israel.”

Should the bride of Messiah go to the waters of the *mikvah*? Absolutely! Water immersion is the New Covenant equivalent of the *mikvah*. The Bible says in Mark 16:16: “*He who believes and is baptized (immersed, goes to the mikvah) will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” When we as believers are immersed in water we reckon our old selves dead to sin, no longer under the authority of the evil one. We are alive to God, submitted to a new master: Yeshua, our Bridegroom/King. We have been cleansed by His blood, and a new beginning is ours as a part of the bride of Messiah. Yeshua experienced immersion in the Jordan as recorded in Matthew 3:16. As He entered the waters of the *mikvah* the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove. As we follow Yeshua in the *mikvah*, the Spirit of God does something new in us as well!

It is always a thrill to accompany pilgrims on our Israel tours as we conduct a *mikvah* service at the Jordan River. One of the young women on our 1996 Bridal Tour asked God to send two doves when she was immersed in the Jordan River. As she prepared to enter the waters of the *mikvah*, an entire flock of doves flew overhead. Tears streamed down her face as she realized the abundance of blessings that God desires to shower upon His bride.

P.S. When Jewish believers go to the *mikvah*, they do not become gentiles. Gentiles, on the other hand, do become spiritual Jews! The Jewish believers are coming under the authority of a Jewish Messiah. Non-Jews are actually making a public statement that they have become children of Abraham by faith in Yeshua. Both have experienced a circumcision of the heart. In a very real sense, the non-Jew has “converted” and the Jew has been “completed.” See Romans 2:28-29, Romans 11:13-18, and Ephesians 2:11-13.



## Departure of the Bridegroom

Once the marriage covenant was sealed, the bridegroom in ancient Israel left his beloved to go to his father’s house to prepare a wedding chamber, *chadar*, for her. He would be gone for up to twelve months. During this time, his wife-to-be would prepare herself to leave her parents’ home to live with her husband’s family and become part of their household. This reminds me of Psalm 45:10-11: *“Hearken, O daughter; and consider and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty...”*

When Yeshua spoke to his disciples before He left earth to return to His Father’s house, He used a bridal metaphor with which all of them were intimately acquainted. We read His words in John 14:2-3: *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Yeshua, our Heavenly Bridegroom, left His bride to go prepare a wedding chamber for her. He promised to return for her. Although that was nearly 2,000 years ago, His promise is still good and His return is near. We live in the day when Israel has been reborn as a nation, when Hebrew has been resurrected as a language, when God has brought His people back to Israel from the four corners of the earth, when Jerusalem has become the stone of stumbling prophesied by Zechariah and others. These and many other prophetic signs say to us today: *“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!”*

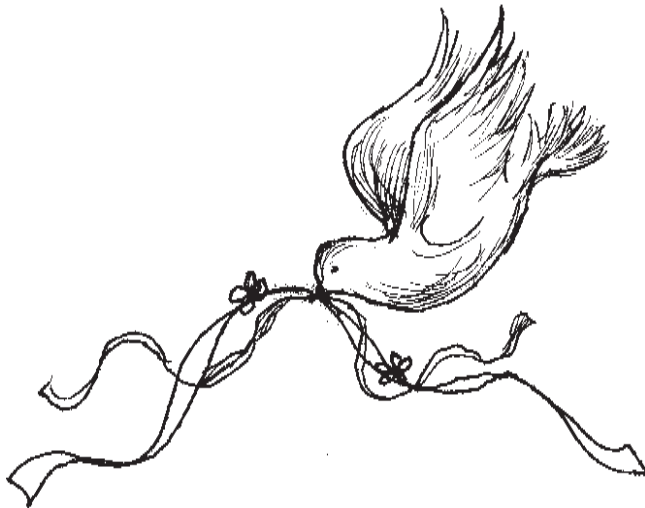
While we await His return, Yeshua’s bride should be faithful and spiritually alert. This is the hour to pray and fast. An interesting verse about fasting is found in Matthew 9:15. Consider these words as an exhortation to the bride of Messiah: *“And Yeshua said to them (the Pharisees), ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.’”* Prayer and fasting . . . a major part of the preparation of Messiah’s bride while she awaits His return.

Although Yeshua is away, preparing a place for us, we are not entirely alone, for His servant the Ruach HaKodesh is with us. This is a source of great comfort to Messiah’s bride. The presence of God’s Spirit keeps our Bridegroom with us, even though He is no longer here on earth. The following words of Yeshua spoken just prior to His departure gladden the heart of His bride: *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you... when*

*He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:7,13-14).*

Our Bridegroom has departed, but through His Spirit He is with us continually. We should be ever grateful for this gift.

**“I go to prepare a place for you.”**  
**John 14:2**



## **The Consecrated Bride**

The Jewish bride (*kallah* in Hebrew) was set apart, consecrated, separated unto her bridegroom while he was away preparing her wedding chamber. A verse in the Song of Songs (4:12) refers to the bride’s state: *“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”* *Kallah* literally means the secluded, or enclosed one. The bride belonged to her beloved, the one who had purchased her, and was to have eyes for none other. In fact, she was to have what the Bible calls “doves’ eyes” (Song of Songs 1:15). What do doves’ eyes symbolize? Faithfulness, singleness of vision (doves have no peripheral vision), gentleness, and loving commitment (doves mate for life). And of course, doves are a symbol of the Ruach HaKodesh. In the case of Messiah’s bride, the Bridegroom longs to see the reflection of His Spirit in His bride’s eyes. As I mentioned before, the Hebrew word for one who is betrothed, faithfully awaiting her beloved, is *m’kudeshet*. This is what we are today in Yeshua.

It was probably easy for a bride in ancient Israel to keep her bridegroom foremost in her heart and mind during the first few months after his departure. After all, she had the gifts he had given her to look at each day. Perhaps he sent letters to her also. But after a while, when his return was delayed, the temptation at the marketplace to look at another handsome man might have been a reality with which she had to struggle. Would her bridegroom keep his promise and return for her? Why hadn’t he come yet? Could he be trusted? These thoughts and others might have been entertained by the bride in ancient Israel. There were undoubtedly scoffers at that time just as the Bible says there will be in our day, who question the integrity and faithfulness of our Bridegroom. 2 Peter 3:3 tells us about them: *“Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His*



coming?... ‘ “ Though He tarry, we have every confidence that our Bridegroom is coming back for us. We are His consecrated bride, awaiting His return.

The same Spirit that sought the bride of Messiah consecrates and helps to prepare her. A type of the Holy Spirit is seen in the book of Esther, giving us a glimpse of how a bride is prepared. Haggai, the king’s servant, prepared Esther for her union with the king by prescribing six months of oil of myrrh (for purification) and six months of sweet oils (for beautification) (Esther 2:12). Esther did not choose what she would wear, nor how she would prepare herself for the king. She left it up to Haggai and followed his advice. Esther, *hadassah* in Hebrew, means “I will be hidden.” Messiah’s bride, today, is hidden in Him, (Colossians 3:3) hidden in the cleft of the Rock, (Songs 2:14) and submitted to the working of the Holy Spirit in her life. He shows the bride how to live for the Bridegroom, not for herself (2 Cor. 5:15). He is intimately involved in her preparation.

To be “consecrated” is to be “holy.” Holiness comes through yielding to the Holy Spirit in our lives. The consecrated bride of Messiah is God’s treasured possession, His witness, His servant, His worshipper, even His army. She is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and does battle with the enemy of her soul. Her consecration is a source of strength and anointing. Yeshua delights in our separation to Him. We may be in the world, but we are not of the world. We belong to our Heavenly Bridegroom.

One of the symbols of a bride’s consecration was a crown. Brides wore either a crown of flowers (the “garden enclosed” mentioned earlier) or a golden “Jerusalem of Gold” bridal crown (which I wore on our 25th Anniversary). Many years ago, a woman in Chicago saw me wearing a floral crown on a Jewish Jewels television program and wrote the following note to me and Neil:

*“This evening when I saw the bride dressed with leaves and flowers in her hair, I almost fainted. Not so long ago I had a dream and in it I was dressed in bridal clothes with this kind of headdress. I wore a long white gown and carried calla lillies in my arms. I was crying because I knew I was not worthy of the one I was going to meet. Then I looked down and I was walking on white satin and so also were people in front of me and all around me, all dressed the same way. You see, I was beautiful, young, straight and slim. I am 77 years old, bent, but loving my Savior.” Evelyn J.*

God gave this precious lady a vision of His consecrated bride. I also had a vision of His bride, but a different kind of vision. In 1980, I had a vision of a dead bride in a casket, and the Lord spoke to me to lay hands on this bride. She represented two groups of people, as I later came to understand: Yeshua’s bride and Israel, God’s wife. The first was asleep, the second, dead (in trespasses and sins), but they both looked the same. Could Messiah’s bride be asleep as the hour of His coming draws near? We find the answer to this question in the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew chapter 25. The Bible tells us that both the wise and foolish virgins were sleeping while the bridegroom delayed. Even those of us who love the Lord with all our hearts and serve Him full-time in the ministry are not walking in the power, anointing, or blessing that God has for us. Some part of us is asleep. When we get to our Bridegroom’s home in Heaven, we will see how much power was available to us here on earth that we didn’t use.

May we heed the words of the pastors and teachers that God sends to help prepare the bride of Messiah (Ephesians 4:11-13). May we decide today to listen to the counsel of the Holy Spirit who knows the heart of our Bridegroom as no one else does. With His help, we will be a bride without spot and wrinkle, a holy bride who is looking to Yeshua, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and anxiously awaiting His return.



## Return of the Bridegroom

A bride in ancient Israel had no idea what day or hour her bridegroom would return for her to take her to the wedding chamber. The groom himself didn't know when he'd go to claim his bride. Only his father knew. The father was the one who would decide when all was ready for the wedding, when the bridal chamber was complete, when the fullness of time had come. My husband Neil always says that if it were up to the bridegroom, he would have hammered a few two-by-fours together and returned at once for his bride. But the father of the bridegroom had the last word. We read about this custom in Mark 13:32 in reference to the hour of Yeshua's return: *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

Jewish bridegrooms usually came for their brides late at night, near the midnight hour. Shofars would break the silence of night. There would be shouts in the streets, and a torch-light procession which would wind its way through the town to the home of the bride. This gave her a few extra moments to make final preparations. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, we read about the return of the bridegroom: *"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"* The bride and her attendants would trim their lamps and get ready to go.

There is another cry that resounds in my own bridal heart which I also expect to hear when my Heavenly Bridegroom returns. It is: *"Arise, my love, my fair one and come away"* (Song of Songs 2:10). Yeshua will come for us as a thief in the night, calling us to arise to meet Him in the air. What a romantic escape from our sin-stained world!

After brides in ancient Israel heard that their bridegroom was coming, they prepared themselves to enter a bridal litter or palanquin called *aperion* in Hebrew. This *aperion* is mentioned in the Song of Songs chapter 3:9-10: *"Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin (aperion): He made its pillars of silver; its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love, by the daughters of Jerusalem."*

A procession back to the home of the bridegroom began with the bride in the *aperion* accompanied by musicians, singers, dancers, friends, family and bridal attendants carrying torches. The voice of the bridegroom and the bride would be heard in the streets of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 33:11). The bride would be veiled, and the bridegroom would peek in the *aperion* and check under the veil in a ceremony called *bedeken* to make sure he had the right bride. (Read the story of Jacob and Rachel to find out the origin of this custom.) The bride would be attired in her finest clothing, decked with jewels, glowing and beautiful. (There's no such thing as an ugly bride! – because she knows how much she is loved.)

In 1994 we discovered that the *aperion* of the Bible had been recreated by Reuven Prager of HaMishpochah in Jerusalem. I had the great privilege of being carried in it as we re-enacted the ancient Jewish wedding for our 25th Anniversary in 1996. Two shofar blowers, a biblical harpist and a flautist accompanied me as four strong Israelis called *Giborei Yisrael* (heroes of Israel), carried me in the *aperion*. Five bridesmaids followed (reminiscent of the five wise virgins of Matthew 25), carrying multi-wicked havdalah candles, symbolic of the torchlight of ancient times.

Yeshua, our Heavenly Bridegroom, will return for us when the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, His Father, gives Him permission to do so. We too will hear a shout as well as the sound of the shofar. We may also see light, as if from torches. It will all happen quickly at the midnight hour of history – and we won't have time to draw close to God if we haven't already. Our Bridegroom, the same One who made Himself an *aperion* (an earthly body), will appear in the clouds as our King, the Lover of our souls: *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

*"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."* (Matthew 24:27) Let us prepare our hearts for His coming, and look up, for our redemption draws near.

# The Huppah

The second half of the ancient Jewish wedding ceremony, *nisuin* or *huppah*, is also called the “hometaking.” *Huppah* refers to both a part of the wedding ceremony and the actual bridal canopy that covers the bridal couple. The original meaning of *huppah* was “room” or “covering.” The *huppah* of ancient times was a special room built in the bridegroom’s father’s home. It is mentioned in the Bible in verses such as Psalm 19:5 and Joel 2:15.

*Nisuin* comes from the verb *nasah* which means to lift up, to bear or to carry. As mentioned earlier, the bride was lifted up in the *aperion* and carried to her waiting bridegroom. The bridegroom always arrived at the *huppah* before his bride to welcome her to the place he had prepared for her. Bride and bridegroom would greet the guests gathered at his father’s house and then be escorted to the bridal chamber where they would be alone for seven days, the marriage would be consummated, and the second part of the marriage ceremony would be complete. The best man or “friend of the bridegroom” waited outside the wedding chamber to hear the voice of the bridegroom tell him that the marriage was consummated. Then all the guests began a week long celebration. John, referring to Yeshua’s voice, said the following: “*He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled*” (John 3:29). The seven day period was also called the “week of the bride.” This week is mentioned in the story of Jacob, Leah and Rachel in Genesis chapter 29: “. . . and Laban said, ‘It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years.’”

The *huppah* as a room in the bridegroom’s father’s house was eventually replaced by a bridal canopy. This canopy was usually a square cloth of silk or velvet, supported by four poles, and held up by four men. It symbolized the new home to which the bridegroom would take his bride. As a symbolic house, open on four sides, the *huppah* represented the Jewish home filled with *hesed* (acts of love) including hospitality to strangers, hence its “openness.”

The *huppah* has taken many forms throughout the centuries. At times a *tallit* (prayer shawl) was spread over the bridal couple to serve as the *huppah*. A *huppah* may be ornately embroidered with Jewish symbols, or constructed of fine silk or velvet. In some Jewish weddings today, the *huppah* is made entirely of flowers. In ancient times the poles of the *huppah* were made from trees that were planted at the birth of the bridegroom or, sometimes, at the birth of both bridegroom and bride (cedar tree for a male child, pine for a female).

Today at Jewish weddings seven blessings (*Sheva B’rachot*) are chanted as the couple stands under the *huppah*. These blessings have been part of the Jewish wedding ceremony for hundreds of years. They are also called *Birkot Nisuin*. The end of the seven blessings traditionally marks the beginning of married life. Perhaps the friend of the bridegroom originally chanted the *Sheva B’rachot* while the couple spent seven days in the bridal chamber. The first of the seven blessings is the blessing over the second cup of wine that seals the marriage covenant. We enjoyed hearing the blessings chanted over us in Jerusalem. They are as follows:

1. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. (blessing over the second cup)
2. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has Created all things to Thy Glory.
3. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of man.
4. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made man in thine image, after Thy likeness, and has prepared unto him, out of his very self, a perpetual fabric. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Creator of man.
5. May she who was barren (Zion) be exceedingly glad and exult, when her children are gathered within her in joy. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who makest Zion joyful through her children.
6. O make these loved companions greatly to rejoice, even as of old Thou didst gladden Thy creatures in the Garden of Eden. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who makest bridegroom and bride to rejoice.

7. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride, mirth and exultation, pleasure and delight, love, brotherhood, peace and fellowship. Soon O Lord our God, may there be heard in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the jubilant voice of bridegrooms from their canopies, and of youths from their feasts of song. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who makest the bridegroom to rejoice with the bride.

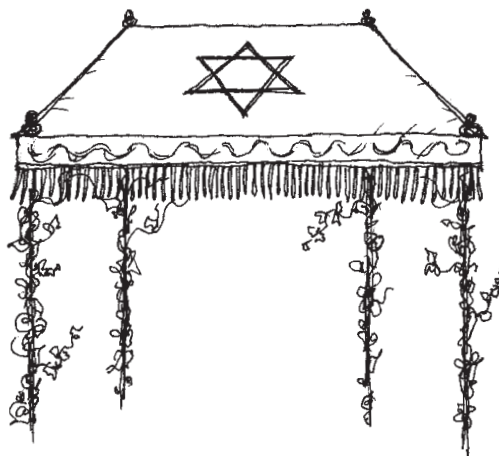
Although the blessing over the wine was the first one chanted under the *huppah*, the second cup is not taken until all the other blessings are chanted. Then bride and bridegroom sip the wine and the marriage covenant is sealed forever. Since ancient times, bridegrooms have broken a glass at the end of the *huppah* ceremony. This custom is still a part of Jewish weddings today. A thin glass is usually wrapped in a napkin to contain the fragments as it is smashed under foot by the bridegroom. At one time in history, the glass that was broken under the *huppah* was the one used to seal the pre-nuptial covenant of *kidushin*. The betrothal was over, the marriage had begun and the two lives would never be the same. The broken glass symbolized this reality. Since there are still two cups of wine taken at a Jewish wedding today, symbolizing the two parts of the Jewish wedding, it would be nice to have one of very thin glass and one of silver. The first would be the one that is broken as in ancient times. The second cup, made of silver could be kept and passed down through generations. Perhaps we should start that tradition!

Since the *huppah* was originally the place of marital union and therefore required privacy, a custom developed in which the couple met privately after the wedding ceremony to spend the first few minutes alone together as husband and wife. This custom is called *yihud* and is still practiced among some Jewish groups today.

The spiritual parallel to the *huppah* for the bride of Messiah begins as we are lifted up off the earth to be taken to our heavenly wedding chamber. We will spend one week (seven years) with our Bridegroom/King, and we will become one, *echad*, with Him. We shall be like our Bridegroom in that day: *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is”* (1 John 3:2).

Richard Booker has suggested in his book, **Here Comes the Bride**, that the New Jerusalem is the wedding chamber that our Bridegroom is preparing for us, an eternal *huppah* that will one day descend from heaven with us (Rev. 21:9-10). What an awesome thought! Imagine a *huppah* that is a city approximately 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high! While the bride of Messiah is in this bridal chamber with Yeshua, the rest of the world will be in a time of tribulation. Isaiah 26:20-21 speaks about this time: *“Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is passed. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity...”*

Scripture seems to indicate that the bride of Messiah will be hidden away with her Bridegroom while the wrath of God is poured out on the earth (See Zephaniah 1:14-17). We can be sure of one thing – If we’re hidden in the Beloved now, we’ll be hidden in Him no matter what devastation comes upon the earth. His banner (*huppah*) over us is love (Song of Songs 2:4)!



# The Marriage Supper

Following the seven days in the *huppah* or bridal chamber, the bride and bridegroom in ancient Israel joined their guests (called ‘children of the bridechamber’ or *b’nai huppah*) for a joyous marriage feast. The first meal that the bride and bridegroom shared with their guests was called a *seudat mitzvah*, a festive meal, and had religious significance. The purpose of the meal was to instill joy in the hearts of the bride and bridegroom. The roots of this meal go back to Jacob’s father-in-law Laban who invited all the local people to a party after Jacob and Leah’s wedding (Genesis 29:22).

The playing of music at the wedding feast was considered a religious duty. Flutes were traditionally played before the bridal pair, and dancing before the bride was a regular part of the celebration.

Will there be a marriage supper for the bride of Messiah? There certainly will be, according to Revelation 19:6-9. Let’s read about it: *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb”!’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’.”*

Will the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, the apostles and all the Old Testament saints? Will we all rejoice together as we celebrate our oneness with our God? What will it be like to see Miriam dance with her tambourine and Peter dance a *mitzvah tantz* with Yeshua’s bride? Imagine dancing with Yeshua Himself! Such joy is beyond comprehension, but it will soon be ours!

Yeshua’s bride will rule and reign with Him for 1,000 years during what is called the millennium. She will tabernacle with him, under another symbolic covering – like a *huppah*, but actually a *sukkah* (booth or tabernacle). Our God will cover us forever. He is our Bridegroom and we are His bride. In our great joy, our feasting will go on and on.

Until that glorious day, let us draw near by faith to our Heavenly Bridegroom with a heart filled with love and gratitude. We have the great privilege of feasting on Yeshua’s words of life even now. He beckons to us by His Spirit saying: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”*

Those of us who look forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9) must extend an invitation to others to come. We as Yeshua’s bride should have the word “Come!” in our hearts and on our lips in increasing measure. Reach out, along with the Ruach HaKodesh, and call others who don’t know the Messiah to the marriage supper of the Lamb: *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come, and whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).*

