

The Marriage Supper of The Lamb

Christ and His Bride and The Jewish Wedding Ceremony

Both the Old and the New Testaments describe how God through Christ, the Bridegroom, is in the process of marrying His bride, the believers in Him, who will soon live and dwell with Him forever.

God ordained and established marriage and its divine sanctity in Genesis, when He brought Adam and Eve together to become one flesh. (Genesis 2:21-24) Adam is a type of Christ here. (Rom 5:14) God had a deep sleep fall upon Adam. Sleep is synonymous with death. (Eph 5:14) The deep sleep that God caused to fall upon Adam is a picture of the crucifixion and death of Jesus. God brought a deep sleep upon Adam so He could take a rib from the side of his flesh.

This required the shedding of blood. This is a picture of Christ who was pierced in the side of His flesh, shedding His own blood when He hung on the tree. From the rib of Adam, God made Eve. By the death of Jesus and our faith in Him we become wedded to Him, and thus the Bride of Christ. By accepting, trusting, and believing in Jesus, we become one with Him.

[Eph 5:31] 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. [Eph 5:32] This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

[2 Cor 11:2] For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, which I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony God gave to the Jewish people was to teach us also about the wedding of the Messiah. This ceremony consisted of 12 steps.

Notice the complete similarities to this wedding ceremony and the Church, or Bride of Christ today.

1. The selection of the bride.

The bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom. The father would send his trusted servant, known as the agent of the father, to search out the bride. Read Gen 24.

In this chapter, Abraham (a type of God the Father) wishes to secure a bride for Isaac (a type of Messiah) and sends his servant Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit) to do this task. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin and lead them to God (John 16:7-8).

Just as the bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom, so the believers in the Messiah are chosen by God. (John 15:16) The bridegroom chose the bride and lavished his love upon her and she returned his love.

This is seen in Eph 5:25. Rebekah consented to marry Isaac even before she met him. Now, the bride of the Messiah agree to become the bride of Christ even though we have never seen Him. (1 Pet 1:8)

2. A bride price was established.

A price would have to be paid for the bride. Jesus, being our bridegroom paid a very high price for His bride, the body of believers. The price He paid was His life (1 Cor 6:20).

3. The bride and groom are betrothed to each other.

Betrothal is the first of two steps in the marriage process. Betrothal legally binds the bride and the groom together in a marriage contract, except they do not physically live together. Whenever you accept the Lord into your heart and life, you become betrothed to Him while living on earth.

4. A written document is drawn up.

This contract states the bride price, the promises of the groom, and the rights of the bride. The groom promises to work for her, to honor, support, and maintain her in truth, to provide food, clothing, and necessities, and to live together with her as husband and wife. This contract was the unalienable right of the bride, to executed and signed before the ceremony. The Bible is the believer's contract.

5. The bride must give her consent.

The personal application to those who desire the Lord to come into their hearts and lives is to accept his invitation to do so by faith. As His bride, we are saying "I do".

6. Gifts were given.

Gifts were given to the bride and a cup called the cup of the covenant was shared between the bride and the groom.

The rite of the betrothal is completed when the groom gives something of value to the bride and she accepts it. Today, the gift that is given is usually a ring. When the groom places the ring on the bride's finger, the rite of betrothal is completed. This completed rite is known in Hebrew as kiddushin, which means "sanctification." The gifts to the bride are symbols of love, commitment, and loyalty. The gift God gives to those who accept Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He gave us gifts, including righteousness, eternal life, grace, faith, and other spiritual gifts. In addition, at this time the cup of the covenant was shared and sealed between the bride and the groom with the drinking of wine. In doing so, the couple drinks from a common cup. The cup is first given to the groom to sip, and then is given to the bride. This cup, known as the cup of the covenant, is spoken of in Jer 31:31-33, and in Luke 20, 22.

7. The bride had a water immersion, which is a ritual of cleansing.

This indicates a separation from a former way to a new way of life. In the case of marriage, it indicates leaving an old life for a new life with your spouse. Jesus said, in John 3:1-7, that we must be born anew to enter into the Kingdom of God. Believers are to be immersed in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the immerser of God. (Luke 3: 16, Acts 1:5, 11:15-16)

8. The bridegroom departed

The bridegroom departed, going back to his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber. [John 14:2] 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.

At this point, the bridegroom leaves for his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber for his bride. It was understood to be the man's duty to go away to be with his father, build a house, and prepare for the eventual wedding. Before he goes, though, he will make a statement to the bride, "I go to prepare a place for you; if

I go, I will return again unto you."

9. The bride was consecrated

The bride was consecrated and set apart for a period of time while the bridegroom was away building the house. [Rev 21:2] And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Before the bridegroom could go and get the bride, the groom's father had to be satisfied that the son had made every preparation. [Mat 24:36] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Only then could he give permission to the son to go get the bride. Thus, while the bridegroom was working on the bridal chamber, it was the father who "okayed" the final bridal chamber.

10. The bridegroom did not know

The bridegroom did not know when his father would declare the bridal chamber fit and send him to go get his bride. Note the parallels:

[Mark 13:32] "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. [Mark 13:33] Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. [Mark 13:34] It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. [Mark 13:35] Watch therefore – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning – [Mark 13:36]. lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. [Mark 13:37] "And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

Meanwhile, the bride was to wait eagerly for the return of the bridegroom. In the mind of the bride, the bridegroom could come at any time, even in the middle of the night or at midnight. So, she had to be ready at all times. Jesus referred to this in the same verses in Mark above, and in Mat 25:1-13.

11. The bridegroom would return with a shout

The bridegroom would return with a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom comes" and the sound of the ram's horn would be blown.

The time of the return of the bridegroom was usually at midnight. When the bridegroom did come, he came with a shout (Mat 25:6) and with the blowing of a trumpet (1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 4:1). The marriage between the bride and the groom would take place under a wedding canopy.

Since Heaven is a type of canopy, we can see that when Jesus gives a shout for His bride, accompanied by the blowing of a trumpet, the marriage between Christ and his bride will take place in Heaven. The marriage ceremony will have a sacred procession. For this reason, the bridegroom (Jesus) will be led to the canopy first.

When the bridegroom approaches the canopy, the cantor chants, "Blessed is he who comes." This expression means "welcome." Jesus said that He would not return for His bride until these words were said. The groom is greeted like a king under the canopy. During this time Jesus, the bridegroom, will be crowned King under the canopy, which is Heaven.

The bride and groom will go to the wedding chamber, where the marriage will be consummated. They will stay in that wedding chamber for seven days, or a week. At the end of the seven days, the bride and groom will come out from the wedding chamber. This can be seen in Joel 2:16. The word week in Hebrew is

shavuah. It means a "seven". It can mean seven days or seven years. An example of the Hebrew word shavuah for week meaning seven years can be found in Dan 9:24,27.

From this we can see that the believers (bride) in the Messiah (bridegroom) will be with the Messiah in Heaven for His wedding while the earth will be experiencing the seven-year tribulation period. Also in the biblical wedding service that God gave, after you are married, you have a honeymoon.

The honeymoon lasts a week, having the same meaning as the above..Seven-days or seven-years. So this also can refer to Heaven where the previously raptured believers have been enjoying a seven- year honeymoon with the Lord while earth experiences first a false peace and then great tribulation.

12. The Marriage Supper

Finally, there would be a marriage supper for all the guests invited by the father of the bride.

The bride and the groom would be in the wedding chamber for seven days. When the bride and the groom initially went into the wedding chamber, the friend of the bridegroom stood outside the door. All the assembled guests of the wedding gathered outside, waiting for the friend of the bridegroom to announce the consummation of the marriage, which was relayed to him by the groom. John referred to this in John 3:29. At this signal, great rejoicing broke forth.

The marriage was consummated on the first night. The bloodstained linen from this night was preserved. It was proof of the bride's virginity. (Deut 22:13-21) On the wedding day, the bridegroom is seen as a king and the bride as a queen. During the consummation of the marriage, the bridegroom (Jesus) will be crowned King over all the earth and the bride (believers in Christ) will live with Him and rule with Him forever.

Jesus will be returning with His bride and we will rule and reign with Him physically during the Millennium (Rev 20:4).

The promises that God provided for the believers in Christ are legally ours (2 Corinthians 1:20).