

JEWISH MARRIAGE

A Picture of Jesus and the Church.

The Jewish marriage consists of two parts:

1. First, the betrothal (Erusin or Kidushin)
2. About two years later, the second part took place. This is the wedding ceremony (Nisuin or Huppah).

The betrothal = parallel to the engagement in most ways except that in the ancient Jewish custom, it was binding (so binding that it could not be broken without a divorce). You were considered bound together from the period you entered the betrothal contract until the wedding day.

When Joseph discovered that his betrothed wife Mary was with child he had real grounds to obtain an orthodox divorce and would have if the angel had not appeared unto him and explained what was going on. From that point on Joseph knew it was the hand of God that was upon her. He had no more reason to put her away.

Orthodox divorce = traditional, customary divorce according to the Mosaic Law as interpreted in the Talmud (binding law). This could be even to the point of recommending death. Putting away= means divorcing; or, declaring her defiled (thus making her the same as a prostitute)...whereby she would be declared unclean and could not lawfully marry one of God's chosen people; or...could mean stoning her to death.

When studying the scriptures it becomes evident that intimacy between Jesus and the Church (born-again believers) is no better

illustrated than in the ancient Jewish wedding customs. The Lord gave us these things so that we could and would understand his attributes. This is His purpose for every believer. Jesus, himself, made several references to the Church in being like a Bride waiting for her Bridegroom.

The whole marriage rite is laid out in a series of twelve (12) steps:

1. Aleph, meaning - Father, strong leader.

The bridegroom's father chooses the bride; the groom in most cases does not. He sends a friend or a trusted servant to come to terms with the parents of the prospective Bride, and makes all the arrangements, **Example: Abraham sending his trusted servant, Eliezer, to go and find a bride for Isaac.** The bride may not have any idea of what this person looks like or even know his age. All she knows is she will spend her whole life with him if she says yes to this marriage! This representative can be seen as a portrait of the Father's Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. It is he who nudges our hearts, and calls us to enter into this union with our bridegroom (Jesus, the Messiah). John 6:43-44; 1 Peter 1:8

2. Bet, meaning: Household, house or tent

The price was secured for the bride (dowry), and was usually something of great value (lands, livestock, silver or gold). **Example: Eliezer came with 10 camels filled with gifts to secure.** In the believer's instance the supreme price was paid, the precious blood of Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus left His home and the glory of heaven to come to earth to pay the ultimate price for a bride. This was so He might return once again to prepare for us a place, a Home with Him in the glory of Heaven 1 Peter 1:18-19

3. Gimel, meaning: To lift up; into

The betrothal ritual is like an engagement party. The promise was made and it was binding. The man and wife do not live together and have no sexual intimacy at this time. A cup of wine is lifted up and drunk by the bridegroom to seal the betrothal. Matthew 26:27-29 "And Jesus took the cup in His right hand, lifted it, blessed it, and gave it to His followers saying, 'Drink ye all of it,

for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that Day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

Jesus, when lifting the cup at the Passover, understood that in just a short time from that moment, He would also be lifted up on a CROSS. IT WOULD BE FOR HIS BRIDE THAT HE WOULD SUFFER AND DIE.

Over and over again we will see that He "alone cuts this Covenant,"

We have no part, other than to accept what He has done for us

4. Dalet, meaning: Door, a pathway, entrance, enter.

The written marriage contract is drawn up and in it the Bride is promised that she will be provided and cared for in every way. It states that all of her needs will be fulfilled by the Bridegroom. The Hebrew term for Bridegroom is "Hatan" meaning: "one who enters Covenant."

This contract is always signed before two witnesses, then given to the bride and her father.

The Holy Scriptures are our wedding document...telling us all that our Bridegroom has done for us...and so much more.

Over and over Jesus, our Messiah (bridegroom), declares His love for us! He has promised to provide for all our needs and our necessities...and we should never be fearful.

He is the pathway...our door into His Father's house.

Matthew 6:28-30

Philippians 4:19

Hebrews 12:2

5. Hey, meaning: to reveal, window.

The bride had to be in agreement with this marriage...and so it is with us.

In looking through a window...we are not at the place where we are seeing; we are either looking outside and we are inside...or we are outside looking inside, but we can see the beauty of knowing what is on the other side. We can only see as far as our eyes can see...but there is so much more. By our free will do we enter into this contract. Even the Saints of old were looking ahead to this wonderful place and event. Abraham, by conviction...went to a location which he had not seen to receive his promised inheritance...He obeyed God. Hebrews 11:8-10. **Today...to enter into this Covenant, I must accept Jesus as the Son of God, and**

confess Him with my mouth to be Lord of my life. When Jesus is revealed to us it is by the servant, the Holy Spirit. We must say, "I do"...or we must reject His love for us...His Covenant.

The word for accepting and saying I do (Hebrew) is

Daat. Making this selection is really our first act of intimacy with our Bridegroom... saying, "I love you"...and entering into a Covenant with Him.

6. Vav, meaning: To secure...a peg or nail.

At this point, the cup is drunk by both the bride and bridegroom. This is called the "shared cup of the 'Brit' (Covenant)". The two are considered married at this point. However, the consummation (physical intimacy) is still not completed. The betrothed secured and sealed.

Gifts are now given to the Bride and her family from the Bridegroom or His Servant (remember Abraham and Eliezer with the gifts)...Eliezer means "comforter, helper (picture of the Holy Spirit).

Every time we share in the cup of Communion we are reaffirming our marriage Covenant with our Bridegroom (Jesus). He achieved for us...the Covenant of "Communion in His blood."

By the way, His wine is the best wine...read John 2:10. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Important)

Jesus gave many gifts to us...the Holy Spirit and all of His gifts: Messiah's Peace, His joy, His knowledge, Eternal life, His Righteousness which is our Cover, and best of all His love everlasting.

This covenant was secured by the nails of the Covenant of the Cross...

7. Aayin, meaning: Cut, to cut off, a weapon.

The word for the Jewish bride is "Kallah" meaning "complete." **The bride goes through a ritual cleansing (immersion; washing) to symbolize her turning aside from all the former things and starting a new life with her Beloved. We, in turn, are given water baptism for the symbol of purification of our old ways and to make us ready for our Lord.**

Romans 6:3-6, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were immersed into Jesus were immersed into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been seeded together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

When we obey the Lord and follow his example of immersion, we are embarking on our new life by departing and saying, farewell to the old ways. Again...the choosing is ours to obey or not to obey Him.

8. Chet, meaning a chamber, separate, private.

At this point the bridegroom would depart and go back to his father's house to prepare a place for the wedding and his new bride. A pledge (a promise) is made by the bridegroom affirming to his bride that he will indeed return for her. Jesus did the same...Hallelujah!!

Jesus pledged to us...John 4:1-3

These words are the same words spoken in the ancient Jewish Wedding rite. Jesus speaks to His followers as a Bridegroom, affirming to them that He would come to take them to Himself.

This is when our Messiah, our Jesus, will come to sequester us in a chamber made ready for His Bride (the Church). I think it will be for the 7 years...One to match each day that the Bride and Bridegroom spends in the wedding chamber, alone and separated from the rest of the world.

Isaiah 26:20-21... "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: conceal thyself as it were for a little moment, until the wrath be overpast..."

The time frame is after the 7 years of tribulation...God's wrath has passed, not before.

9. Tet, meaning: to surround, to twist.

Now...the time of waiting comes! The bride prepares herself to make sure that she will be the best bride she can be. She waits with every breath for the bridegroom to come. She doesn't know the exact time when her Beloved will come for her. This time is only known by the bridegroom's father. When the father sees that all of his son's preparations for the wedding chamber is ready, then he will allow his son to transport his bride to his home. Matthew 25:1-5

This parable is a teaching about "readiness."

Readiness speaks of many things to each of us. I think it means to have a zeal or eagerness for the coming of the Lord. We should be anxious...but, for sure, ready!

Friends and family surround the bride...She is filled with all kinds of emotions. She might have to go off on a long journey (Rebecca...going to a far country for her husband, Isaac).

Rebecca is a perfect picture of the anxious Christian, ready for Jesus to come to take her home...for the great marriage made in

heaven. He is coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle. 2 Peter 3:13-14

10. Yod, meaning: a deed, to make, hand.

When the bridegroom comes to get his bride it is more of a willing kidnapping. It could be called a snatching in the middle of the night. However, not without a shout (a blasting of the shofar)...indicating that she must be ready to run to her beloved, to flee with him. Wow...I can't wait for Jesus, our bridegroom, to come and snatch us away.

Matthew 25:6, "At midnight the shout went out; "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to encounter him!"

One of the names for the Feast of Trumpets according to Jewish Literature, is "The wedding day of Messiah."

Jesus has the right to claim his bride...He has paid the price.

11. Kaf, meaning: to cover, to allow, open hand, arm.

The bridegroom with his strong open hand takes his bride away to the place that he has prepared, and the marriage is now consummated.

Blessings are said over the couple (Birkot Nisuin) the 7 blessings. The 2nd cup of wine is now drunk, and it sets the second seal to the marriage covenant. We are waiting to drink this cup with our Bridegroom Jesus.

Now...the new couple will spend 7 days together in the wedding room. This starts the honeymoon cycle.

This is where the bridegroom will cover his bride with himself. The new couple will become one flesh. This is more than a face-to-face encounter...they get to know each other like never before.

1 Corinthians 13:12, "Now we see but it is a poor reflection as in a brass mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

12. Lamed, meaning: prod, toward, staff.

It is time for the wedding feast to begin.

Right after the 7 days of the "huppah" (bridal chamber), the couple come out of the room and join their guests in a very festive marriage feast. This is the meal that the couple share with their guest after the 7 days of being alone is over. **At the end of the 7 days (years in Jesus'..and his bride's case), Jesus will be crowned king and we shall be with Him forever...**

This is for Israel and all who are grafted into her. Messiah has now been given a staff, i.e. "the Rod of God" to rule with, just like all the past kings of Israel.

The 1000 years begins. This is the millennial reign of the Messiah on earth. This is a time of peace...

This is when the Bridegroom will rejoice over His Bride.

Isaiah 62:5

"For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall thy sons marry you: and as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall you God rejoice over you."

Revelation 19:7-9 "Let us rejoice and be delighted and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has fashioned herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Then the angel said to me, 'write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!... These are the true Words of God."

Even so...come, Lord Jesus! We are ready!