

The Beauty of God's Marriage Covenant

- **The marriage theme is prominent in scripture**, beginning in Genesis ending in Revelation.
- God uses this relationship to demonstrate His own love for His people. He intended marriage as a sacred covenant relationship.
- God instituted marriage between one man and one woman in Genesis, then used this model to demonstrate the kind of love He has for us.
- The marriage covenant is also a model for the conditional covenant w/Israel (*Mosaic Covenant. Note, the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional and eternal*).
- A **“Covenant” is very solemn, and serious**. Read the ritual in Genesis 15, as God entered into eternal and unconditional covenant with Abraham (*still in effect*). *This ritual reveals the solemnity of covenants.*
- In the Tanakh (OT scriptures) God **refers to Israel as His “wife.”** Israel (as a covenant people) are already married to YHWH (God, the Eternal One).
- He saved her, cleansed her, rescued her from the world, loved her and brought her to Himself in a spiritual “marriage” covenant. (Mosaic Covenant)
- A covenant can be either *conditional*, or *unconditional*. The Abrahamic covenant is unconditional. God would do what He said He would do, no matter what Abraham or his descendants did.
- **The Mosaic covenant**, however, is conditional. **IF** is the key word. God would bless Israel **IF** Israel was obedient.
- But Israel strayed from God repeatedly. The Holy Spirit references **Israel as a harlot**, whoring after other “husbands” (gods), not faithful to Yahweh. (see Ezekiel 16, 23)
- Israel was warned, and disciplined, even **“divorced”** by God (Jeremiah 3:8), but always reminded of a promise of ultimate restoration with Him (*a “remnant” to be saved and brought back into the marriage covenant with Elohim*).
- In the New Testament an entirely new picture of marriage is given, with new partners.
- The Messiah is referenced as the “bridegroom” and all who believe in Yeshua (*Jesus*) are considered His “bride.”
- The word “bride,” however, is understood in our vernacular as **“engaged” or “bound” to Him** (*by a contract sealed with His blood*), but not yet married (not yet a wife).
- The marriage ceremony and feast is coming later, when we are united with Him.
- Throughout scripture God speaks of **what marriage should be**, a union where two actually “become one.” This speaks not only of a physical union, but also of a spiritual union. A man and wife are to be of one mind, one spirit. (*i.e., “do not be unequally yoked...”*)
- Man has perverted the marriage covenant. In our culture it has become merely a word, not a sacred covenant relationship. We do not understand it as God intended it.



- **We have destroyed the beauty of the marriage** covenant that God used to describe His love for us. All we need do is read the scriptures to know what God intended it to be, and know why He uses that metaphor to describe His relationship with us.
- Marriage should mean that both husband and wife are completely given to each other, sold out, committed, and loving unconditionally, as God loves us. Unfortunately, sin has made the marriage covenant today, as practiced by His creatures, something much less than what God intended. In our sin we have so destroyed the original concept of marriage that we can no longer see how it relates spiritually to our relationship with the God of the Universe.
- **Thankfully**, through scripture, we can know and understand the divine marriage God has in mind. It is much bigger than we think.
- A **New Covenant** was instituted between God and His people. It will replace the Mosaic Covenant, the *old marriage covenant*.
- A new “groom” and a new “bride” are presented in the New Testament.
- Traditional Hebrew customs and traditions of marriage relate beautifully to the role of our bridegroom, Yeshua, and to us His bride.
- We are blessed and drawn closer to Him when we understand these. ***It’s time to do just that...*** There are various “phases” of the marriage process. These are presented below. Our relationship with the Messiah is compared to traditional (and Biblical) Hebrew marriage traditions in the following chart.



Hebrew Marriage Customs	The Bride of Messiah
BETROTHAL: THE MARRIAGE COVENANT (<i>Ketubah</i>)	
Betrothal process, <u>Groom travels to bride's home to make arrangements</u>	Jesus left His Father's house in heaven and traveled to earth, home of His prospective Church, over 2000 years ago for the purpose of obtaining the Church through the establishment of a covenant.
<u>Covenant</u> (marriage contract) established, <u>negotiations for price to be paid (<i>mohar</i>) to purchase bride</u>	Yeshua paid a price to purchase His bride, the Church. The price that He paid was His own life blood shed on the cross. The Father “covenanted” this promise throughout OT.
As symbol of covenant relationship established, <u>groom and bride would drink from a cup of wine</u> and betrothal benediction was pronounced.	Communion is a symbol of the “new” covenant through which Yeshua has obtained the Church (1 Cor. 11:25). He referenced this during Passover meal with the disciples before His death.
Price paid, covenant established, <u>bride declared to be consecrated/sanctified</u> , set apart for her groom.	Church has been declared to be sanctified/set apart exclusively for Messiah (Eph. 5:25-27; 1Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 10:10; 13:12).
SEPARATION: PREPARATION	
After marriage covenant established, groom would leave home of his bride and return to his father's house. There he would remain <u>separate from his bride</u> until appointed time.	Jesus left the earth, the home of the Church (His Bride), and returned to His Father's house in heaven after He had established the new covenant and risen from the dead (John 6:62; 20:17).

During separation, any relations with another man were considered adultery. <u>Betrothal was contractually binding.</u> <i>(Mary's dilemma)</i>	Yeshua has been away from the Church almost 2000 years. Bride is now in period of separation. It is possible for believers to commit spiritual adultery before He returns to take His Church. Paul was concerned about this (2 Cor. 11:2-3)
This separation gave the bride <u>time to prepare for married life.</u>	This time of separation is a time of preparation for the Church. It is the sanctification process of the Holy Spirit to prepare us to be with Jesus.
Groom spent this time preparing a <u>home in his father's house</u> to which he would bring his bride upon their union.	Jesus has been preparing a home for us (the Church, His Bride) in His Father's house during His separation from His Bride (John 14:2)
<u>Only father of the groom knew when time was right</u> for his son to go get his bride. Father would tell his son when that time was, when her home was ready and all preparations were complete.	Jesus said that no one except the Father knows the hour of His return (Mark 13:32).
REUNION: MARRIAGE	
At the end of the period of separation the <u>groom collects his bride</u> to live with him.	Jesus will come to take His Bride to live with Him at the end of the period of separation (John 14:3).
The taking of the bride usually took place at night. The groom, best man and other male escorts would leave the groom's father's house and <u>conduct a torch light procession to the home of the bride.</u>	The taking of the Church will be accomplished by a procession of Jesus and an angelic escort from the Father's house in heaven to the home of the Church/Bride (1 Thess. 4:16). <i>(the "rapture" or catching away, snatching)*</i>
Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she <u>did not know the exact time of his coming.</u> She was always prepared.	The Church does not know the exact time of Jesus' coming for her. The Bride of Messiah should be prepared at all times.
The <u>groom's arrival was preceded by a shout.</u> This would forewarn the bride to be prepared for the coming of the groom.	Yeshua's arrival to take the Church will be preceded by a shout (1 Thess. 4:16).
After the groom received his bride, together with her attendants, the enlarged wedding party would <u>return to the groom's father's house.</u>	The Church will return with Yeshua to His Father's house in heaven after she is snatched from the earth to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17; John 14:2-3).
The <u>wedding guests had already assembled</u> for the marriage/feast.	Yeshua and His Bride (Believers) will find the Old Testament saints assembled in heaven when they arrive. These serve as wedding guests.
Shortly after arrival bride and groom are escorted to the bridal chamber (<i>huppah</i>). Prior to entering the chamber the bride remained <u>veiled</u> so that no one could see her face. Bride and groom entered the bridal chamber alone. There they would enter into physical union for the first time, consummating the marriage that had been covenanted earlier.	The Bride of Messiah will be safely hidden away during the 7 years of the Tribulation. (Isaiah 26:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) She will not be seen by anyone on earth. She is still "veiled." Our spiritual and eternal union is consummated.
¹⁹ Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. ²⁰ 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 past. ²¹ For behold, the Lord comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain. (Isaiah 26:19-21)	



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FEAST: MARRIAGE	
After marriage was consummated, groom would announce this to wedding party waiting outside the chamber (John 3:29). These people would pass on the news of the marital union to the wedding guests.	Jesus and believers will experience <u>spiritual union</u> after their arrival at His Father's house in heaven, thereby consummating their relationship covenanted earlier. Assembled wedding guests will rejoice!
Upon receiving this good news the wedding guests would <u>feast and make merry for the next seven days</u> .	Bride to remain "hidden" for 7 years after arrival at Yeshua's Father's house in heaven. While the Tribulation is on earth, believers in heaven totally hidden. *
During the 7 days of wedding festivities, sometimes called "7 days of the huppah," the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber, with her bridegroom. At the end of these seven days groom would bring his bride out of the bridal chamber, now with her veil removed, so that all could see his bride.	Jesus will bring His WIFE out of heaven in His Second Coming at conclusion of 7-year Tribulation <u>in full view</u> , so that all can see who the true Bride is (Col. 3:4). She is "unveiled" at this point. (Revelation 19:7-8, Jude 14-15, Zech 14:5). The marriage has already happened.

**It should be noted that not everyone agrees about what has been termed a "pre-tribulation" removal of the Body of the Messiah, the Bride (commonly referred to as the "rapture." This author believes there is enough evidence to support this concept, and that these notes regarding the Bride and the Messiah are merely the "icing on the cake." Since scripture does not clearly state one position or the other about the timing of the rapture, there is ample speculation, even among very scholarly believers. Our differing views about the rapture should cause disunity among us. We also believe that we cannot state this idea for a fact, simply because scripture does not state it as a fact in plain terms. Therefore, believers should be ready, all the time, for her Bridegroom, but also be prepared to experience the final week of Daniel we call the Tribulation. If He comes for us before then, we will rejoice. If He comes for us later, we will proclaim and live for Him, and rely upon His provision for us. Either way He will come and we will be united with Him for eternity.*

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!!! This gets more amazing...

- God "divorced" Israel in the Old Testament, but He never intended divorce. He allowed it under Moses because the people were sinful and stiff necked, but He established very clear guidelines for divorce. (*Israel's unfaithfulness*)
- Divorce is NEVER God's plan. In fact, He says He HATES it (Malachi 2:16). If marriage is practiced as God intended, there would NEVER be a divorce, ever.
- While God allowed divorce under certain conditions, He is not fallible or stiff necked like man, and is not held to His own Law for man. Israel was His wife, and would be again.
- **The way He went about it is so beautiful.** Romans 7 gives us a glimpse of the marriage covenant under the Mosaic Law: "*Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? ² For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. **But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.** ³ So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man."* (7:1-3)
- Paul reveals this truth about the Mosaic Law to make the point that the old husband was YHWH and Israel was bound to His Law (which brought death). Now believers' new husband is the Messiah Himself, the perfect keeper of the original Law on our behalf (grace).

- **But it goes much further than this. Do you see what God did? HE DIED TO RELEASE HIS “WIFE” ISRAEL FROM THE LAW, SO SHE WOULD BE FREE TO MARRY ANOTHER...The Messiah! God Himself. Hebrew believers today, since the time of the Messiah, are not married to YHWH, they are betrothed to Yeshua!**
- Although too much for us to completely understand (*we can't possibly comprehend the incredible beauty, intricacy and wonder of this!*) we can see the perfection of God's plan, releasing His “Wife” from the Law to be Married spiritually to the Messiah. And then, of course, we know they are both the I AM of the Word. **Wow!**
- **And we rejoice, together with Israel, in her Sh'ma: *Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad!* (Hear O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is ONE!) (Deuteronomy 6:4) **Yahweh and Yeshua are ONE, one bridegroom with one wife** – the **united houses of Ephraim** (*the fullness of the gentiles*) and **Judah** – both together, **the bride of Messiah**.**
- What follows the Sh'ma is our duty (our vow) to our “husband” – called the **Ve'ahavta...** **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”** (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- The bridegroom is indeed coming soon. **Until He arrives, we keep ourselves as “virgins” also, true to Him, and undefiled.**

*Beyond our comprehension, but not beyond our complete awe
at the beauty and perfection of God's Word, and his plan for those who love Him.*

He has no interest in ritual or religion.

He desires a relationship with us – this relationship.