

THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION

**THE MARRIAGE OF JESUS CHRIST
AND THE CHURCH**



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CHURCH

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In order to fully grasp the depth of understanding regarding the plans of Jesus Christ and His love for you individually as a believer, it is imperative that you come to a deeper awareness of the mind of God concerning His church. To understand the mind of God in relation to the church, you must recognize that Jesus views the church as His bride. In other words, the institution of marriage represents the most descriptive example of the type of relationship God wants with us. The concept of the church as being the bride of Christ is well established in Scripture. In the Old Testament, the identity of the church is hidden. However, the New Testament reveals the hidden, unique entity called the church as God's bride. This church - the bride of Christ - is not one specific local church or denomination, but the entire body of true believers since Pentecost. All who have received salvation by obedience to the gospel plan are collectively His bride. This idiom of marriage is clearly expressed in a number of New Testament passages...

“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.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

-Ephesians 5:31-32

The Greek word for mystery (mustérion – Strong's #G3466) conveys a different meaning than the same word does in English. In Greek, it expresses something that was formerly hidden but now revealed.¹

The Apostle Paul considered it his unique privilege to reveal the, until then, hidden mystery of the church as God's bride. Furthermore, through this passage, and others, it becomes clear to us that the human marriage institution, which God established back in Genesis, is actually a model or a prototype of what Christ and the church will ultimately be. Paul also describes the church as the pure, virgin bride of Christ in his second letter to the Corinthians.

"...for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

-2 Corinthians 11:2b

As we go on through this study, we will encounter many Biblical passages that carry on this same theme, ranging from Old Testament references to prophetic references describing future events. Examining the panorama of this subject will allow us to recognize the plan of God from the beginning, as well as His plan for future fulfillment, both concerning His desire for a bride.

Additionally, we will also engage in a fascinating examination of the ancient Hebrew wedding customs, and how they uniquely profile all aspects of the plan of redemption. It is astonishing to discover the degree of precision in which God instituted these ancient Hebrew wedding customs in order to prophetically foreshadow His plans for His future bride. These customs also serve as a pattern that helps support our understanding of certain Biblical truths regarding future events.

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1. -Strong's Concordance, entry "3466, mustérion," BibleHub.com. (<https://www.biblehub.com/greek/3466.htm> - Retrieved 11/05/19)

CHAPTER 2

GOD'S PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING

You must recognize that the cross was never “plan B” in the mind of God. In the mind of God, the Incarnation and crucifixion were preordained, certain future events.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

-Revelation 13:8

This verse makes clear to us that it was always His plan to sacrifice His life in order to set apart for Himself a bride. Through the sacrificing of His own life, Jesus established a plan of redemption, which we will refer to as the gospel plan of salvation. We understand from Scripture that the above verse does not mean that Jesus was literally slain before He created the world, but rather that it was always within His plan to do so. In other words, the role of the Son was in view all the way back at creation. And since God exists outside of the dimension of time, not being bound by its linear constraints, it is not inaccurate for Him to say it was done “before.” You must recognize that your God is a God of plans.

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“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

-John 1:1

The Greek word for “Word” here is logos. It refers to the thoughts, the plans, and the expression of God.¹

You need to recognize that God had a plan from the beginning. As we discuss various aspects of the marriage of Jesus Christ and the church, we will review this remarkable plan of salvation and how it correlates to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus according to the mind of God. The ultimate takeaway from our review of the gospel salvation plan should be an appreciation of how this plan was designed to enable you to become the bride of Christ.

1. -Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 2, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887, pp. 25-33.

CHAPTER 3

GOD'S DESIRE FROM THE BEGINNING

It is imperative to gain insight into God's desire from the beginning in order to understand His plans and His motives for the creation of man. There are several places where Scripture states that God "is" something. One of the things Scripture says God is, is love (1 John 4:8, 16). However, love needs a be-loved. It is God's desire that His image creation, humanity, becomes that beloved. One of the basic principles of love however, is that it cannot be forced. It must be a choice enacted by free will. For this reason, God endowed His creation with the unique quality of free will. You can reject God or you can accept God with perfect freedom of choice. If we did not have free will, real love could not exist. Even with all of the sin, sorrow, and evil present in this world, God is still seeking a beloved who will, despite all of these challenges, choose to love Him. Amidst the multitude of voices cursing His name, He is listening, hoping to hear the voice of a lover, saying, "I want you."

Scripture helps us to understand that the main purpose behind the creation of man is to be that lover. However, since love requires the freedom of choice, there will be many who will not choose to love God. When you reject God, you are actually hurting yourself...which also hurts him. Those who do choose to love and follow Him comprise

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what we call the church. The entire purpose for the establishment of the church is to be that lover, which Scripture pictures as a marriage. The Bible refers to the church as a pure, virgin bride set apart unto Christ (2 Cor. 11:2, et al.). The entire purpose of the plan of salvation is for God to enable you to become a part of that bride.

As a member of this unique entity called the church, you must learn to not view human endeavors such as earthly marriage, children, grandchildren, material gain or professional career advancement as your ultimate purpose, ultimate joy, or ultimate driving force in life.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”

-Genesis 15:1

Although this was spoken to Abraham many years ago, how much more is it applicable today during this present church age! As the bride of Christ, your ultimate exceeding great reward is intended to be God and God alone. There are many other elements in life that will gain your love and attention (such as the ones we mentioned – and that’s fine), but the key here is to regard Him always as your ultimate reward and priority.

The ultimate reason for your life is to know God. And not just your life while you are here on Earth, but the whole purpose for your eternal existence is to know Him! That’s why John 17:3 tells us that to know Him is eternal life...

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

-John 17:3

With this foundation of the plan and desire of God in mind, let’s now move forward and begin to discuss this plan of God in action. The first concept you must recognize is that God strategically embedded His plan and desire into the very first couple, Adam and

Eve. As we go through the specifics in this next chapter, the information we discuss should not only give you a profound understanding of God's love for you, but it should also instill in you an awe of the prophetic characteristics of the Bible. Understand that to the Hebrew mind, prophecy is not simply prediction and fulfillment. But maybe even more remarkably, prophecy involves anticipatory patterns and typology. Though the Bible demonstrates these characteristics in some remarkable ways throughout its content, the remaining chapters of this study are truly some of the most astonishing authentications of the validity of the Bible as being an integrated message system originating from outside our time domain.

CHAPTER 4

ADAM AND EVE - A PROTOTYPE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

To gain further understanding regarding the plan of God, we must recognize that from the beginning, He established certain institutions at creation as prototypes of what He wanted. In order to see the marriage of Christ and the church prophetically foreshadowed in Genesis, we need to examine the concept of Adam as the “First Adam,” and Jesus Christ as the “Last Adam.”

“And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

-1 Corinthians 15:45-47

The first Adam was natural, while the Last Adam (Christ) was spiritual. Furthermore, Paul, in Romans, tells us that Adam was a figure, or a model of one who was to come after him – namely, Christ. In other words, he was a “type” or a “prototype” of Christ.

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.” -Romans 5:14

We recognize the first Adam as a prototype, or a model of the Last Adam. So then in order to understand the purpose of the Last Adam, we must examine the first Adam. In examining the first Adam, we can also explore the parallels between the two. Let’s examine several...

- The first Adam: The Bible says that the first Adam stood alone, having been given dominion over all things on earth.

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

-Genesis 2:18

The word “good” here (tob - Strong’s #H2896) has different translations, but the one that really fits within the context here is “pleasing,” or “pleasurable.”¹ It is not pleasurable for the man to be alone. Watch what God does!

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”

-Genesis 2:21-22

So, we see that God puts the man to sleep, and out of his side He takes and forms Adam’s wife.

- The Last Adam: The Last Adam stood alone, having dominion over all things as the Creator God. Jesus, before He revealed the name Jesus (which means, “Yahweh

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saves”), was referred to as Yahweh (the Self-Existing One) in the Old Testament.²

But He decided it was not pleasurable for Himself to be alone. So, He put Himself to sleep (the sleep of death) by the cross, and was pierced in His side (by the Roman soldier). Out of His side flowed blood and water (John 19:34), symbolizing birth.

Through the laying down of His life, Jesus brought His bride out of His side in the same fashion as the first Adam. You must recognize that your God was thinking about the crucifixion all the way back at the Creation!

There are many other parallels between the first Adam and the Last Adam. Here are just several more:

- The first Adam was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The Last Adam is “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).
- The first Adam was called a “son of God” (Luke 4:38). The Last Adam was the Son of God (Romans 1:4, 1 John 5:10).
- The actions of the first Adam brought a reign of sin and death upon a once-perfect world (Romans 5:12). Because of the blood shed by the Last Adam, the curse of sin and death will ultimately be removed and righteousness restored (Romans 5:15-21).
- The first Adam lost the battle in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). The Last Adam won the battle in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26).
- The first Adam ate the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and introduced a curse upon the creation. He died and his wife died also (Genesis 2:17). The Last Adam ate the fruit of the tree called the cross...

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”

-Galatians 3:13

He ate the curse of the cross, but the Last Adam had the power to rise and in rising He brought His wife up too!

We need to examine one last incredibly profound element of this model of the first Adam in order to gain a deeper insight to the actions of Jesus Christ on our behalf. In order to do this, we must go back to the Genesis 3 account of the transgression and ultimate fall of Adam and Eve, introducing the reign of sin into the human experience.

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

-Genesis 3:1-7

So, from this chapter, we recognize that apparently Adam was not around while the serpent tempted Eve. The serpent, targeting Eve while Adam was not nearby, and based on her faulty understanding of what God had actually said, was able to ultimately seduce her into sin. With that as our background, we need to examine another passage of Scripture that gives us further perspective of this event.

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“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

-1 Timothy 2:14

In this passage, Paul makes it clear to us that while Eve was deceived, Adam was not. In other words, Adam knew what he was doing. This brings us an entire new level of insight. Let's examine this further...

Suppose that you, as a husband, came home from work one day to find that in your absence, your wife had gotten into some kind of awful sin...

But first, you must try to imagine what a pre-fallen state of being really was. Were Adam and Eve originally clothed with light? Were they able to operate in the extra-dimensions (those beyond length, width, height, and time)? Was this how they communed with God in the garden? Did Eve's fall cause a fracturing of the dimensions, relegating her to only be operative in the physical? While these are only conjectures, they should serve to help us recognize the dilemma Adam faced. Imagine Adam returning while still in his pre-fallen state and finding his wife in a fallen condition. He must have witnessed her in this fallen state, and known that she was finished, by remembering the words of God...

“...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

-Genesis 2:17b

Do you recognize Adam's dilemma? What would you do if you were the husband? You could choose to continue on living eternally in a perfect state of being, but without the one you love...

Here is the insight we need to recognize: Adam loved her so much that he chose to join her in her predicament rather than to go on without her. Whatever destiny was brought upon her by this sin, he willingly and knowingly joined her. Another way of putting it, is that he “became sin for her.” Remember, Paul declared that Adam was a

figure of Christ. This is exactly what Jesus, being the Last Adam did for His beloved bride, the church...

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

-2 Corinthians 5:21

Furthermore, because Adam was willing to do this, there were offspring produced, and a mechanism that God would use to redeem mankind. Jesus Christ, being that ultimate figure who was sinless, would knowingly and willingly take the place of His bride on the cross, dying for us, and in doing so, would provide a mechanism to allow for her redemption. Husbands, do you love your wives this much?

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"

-Ephesians 5:25

The fact that Adam knowingly and willingly entered into Eve's predicament rather than going on without her is precisely why Paul described him as a figure of Christ, who was to come. The point is that's how much Christ loved the church.

The saga that the first Adam began, the Last Adam would finish. God's response in the Garden was to replace their efforts to clothe themselves using fig leaves with coats of animal skins (Gen. 3:21), typifying that humanity would ultimately be covered by the shedding of innocent blood. The concept of a substitutional sacrifice, which would later be codified in the Levitical system (with animal sacrifices), and climaxed at Golgotha (with the death of Christ, the ultimate Passover Lamb), was introduced before they left the Garden of Eden. You must recognize that you and I are the beneficiaries of a love letter, namely, the Bible, written in blood from a wooden cross that was erected in Judea about 2,000 years ago. The purpose of Jesus Christ was depicted in the very beginning of this love letter called the Bible,

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through the prototype, Adam. You and I were on His mind from the very start.

As we bring this chapter to a close, it is important to remember that one of the ways God authenticates His Word is through the use of prophetic patterns that anticipate a later strategic fulfillment. The prophetic typology that was demonstrated here should provide you with an overwhelming sense of awe as you recognize that the author of the Bible had to have originated from outside the dimension of time.

We will now examine another incredible prophetic type of Christ and His bride, the church, but also incorporating the nation Israel and the role of the Hebrew “goel,” or kinsman-redeemer.

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1. *-Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, ed. Stephen D. Renn, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005, p. 443.
 2. *-Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, pp. 436-440, 533.

CHAPTER 5

TYPOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

Ruth is a small interlude between Judges and 1 Samuel in our English Bibles, one that tells the simple story of King David's great grandmother. Yet, we find in it a wonderfully elegant love story that turns out to be a prophetic portrait of the panorama of Scripture, centering on the future marriage relationship between Christ and the church as well as the role of the nation Israel.

The book of Ruth is actually one of the most dramatic books of prophecy in the entire Bible. We find that every detail carries not just a story of romance, but specifically the Romance of Redemption. It gives us a perspective of God's plan for us, as the church is prophetically profiled here in a very surprising way. The typology and skillfully engineered integration with the New Testament displayed in Ruth demonstrate the extra-dimensional origin of the Bible. The Book of Ruth is one of the most significant Old Testament books for the church. Astonishingly, you will discover that it profiles in advance the role of the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ, as well as His future "Gentile bride," the church.

We also find in Ruth, a textbook on the distinctions between Israel and the church. One of the tragic realities of Christianity today is the rampant confusion about God's purposes for Israel. God has a specific

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plan for Israel and a specific plan for the church, and in certain ways they are mutually exclusive. In some ways they are parallel, but separate; and as we explore Ruth, we want to remain sensitive to the differences.

This small four-chapter romance has been venerated in college classes for its elegance as literature, but it also reveals a craftsmanship of prophetic anticipation unrivaled anywhere in Scripture. The narrative involves a hero, Boaz, who's in the role of a "goel" (Strong's #H1350), or the Hebrew term referring to a kinsman-redeemer ¹, whose ultimate commitment of redemption returns forfeited land in Bethlehem to its disenfranchised owner, Naomi, and who also takes a Gentile bride, Ruth.

To follow the plot, one must understand the Law of Redemption (Lev. 25:23-28). Remember that in ancient Israel, land wasn't sold in the way that we are used to today. Since God was the landowner, Israel was simply a tenant under conditions of obedience. When land was "sold," what the buyer received was only the use of the land, not the indefinite title ownership of it. Even then, this "sale" only lasted for a designated number of years, or until the Year of Jubilee. In that 50th year (the Jubilee year), the land would return back to the original owners. Of course, this only took place twice in a century, so it could take many years to get back the rights to the land of one's family. However, there were conditions under which a kinsman (a relative) of the original seller could purchase, or "redeem" the land back to the original family. These conditions were typically noted on the outside of the scroll defining the transaction. It was sealed, and only the near-kinsman could break the seal.

It is worth pointing out that one cannot really comprehend what is going on in Revelation Chapter 5 unless one understands the events involved in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament. In Revelation, we find another sealed scroll, a title deed for all of the earth, and only the Lamb is able to open it. This scroll, in like manner, is noted as having writing on the outside (Rev. 5:1). We can infer that this title deed also lists the details for earth's redemption. In this chapter, the "Kinsman of Adam," Jesus Christ, in His role as Redeemer, is taking possession

of what He had already purchased with His blood as the sacrificial Lamb on the cross. However, He not only purchased and redeemed the land; He also purchased and redeemed a bride – the church.

Looking back at the Ruth story, in addition to understanding the Law of Redemption, you must also recognize the Hebrew Law of Levirate Marriage. This is a provision that dealt with a situation in which a husband passed away with no children. In Deuteronomy 25, the law decreed that a widow could go to her brother-in-law and put a claim on him to take her as his wife, to raise up children for her late husband (Deut. 25:5-10).

This was called a levirate marriage. If the husband had no brother or no living brother, the widow would go to the next nearest kin. The man who took the widow had to meet several conditions to be eligible (Lev. 25:25-31, Deut. 19:1-13, 25:5-10):

1. He had to be a near-kinsman.
2. He had to be able to perform the duty of redeeming the inheritance.
3. He had to be able to take on the other duties required, which included taking the woman to wife.
4. He also had to take on any other duties required, including avenging the late husband's death if he was murdered.
5. And finally, the near kinsman had to be willing. In other words, it was voluntary. It was considered shameful to refuse, but he did have a choice.

In the Ruth story, there were three main issues facing her mother-in-law Naomi. First, she wanted to maintain the name and lineage of her late husband Elimelech among the Israelite people, since both of her sons (one formerly married to Ruth) were both dead without having produced children to continue the family. Second, she needed to take steps to protect her own inheritance, which would be lost without the redemption of her family's land and having heirs to perpetuate it. This land was clearly lost when Elimelech and his family had left Israel to go to Moab during hard times. But now that Naomi

had returned to the land of Israel with her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth, the land needed to be restored. Finally, she wanted to provide rest and security for her faithful but widowed daughter-in-law, Ruth. A marriage of Ruth to Boaz, a close relative, would solve all three problems, and that is exactly what ended up taking place.

The prophetic typology in the Book of Ruth is nothing short of amazing. In the story, Naomi typologically represents Israel, exiled from her land (she initially left Israel and went to Moab during hard times, but later returned to Israel with her widowed Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth); Boaz, typologically representing Christ, is her kinsman who performs the redemption of her family's land; and Ruth (a Gentile bride), typologically representing the church, is also purchased by Boaz for a wife, according to the customs of the levirate marriage. This prophetic patterning extends to virtually every detail of the book. Let's examine this deeper...

Boaz is clearly the kinsman-redeemer in this story, the type of Christ. He's in the role of the "goel" (the kinsman-redeemer), just as Christ is our Kinsman-Redeemer through coming in the flesh as a true human. We find out in Revelation 5 that to open the scroll containing the title-deed to the entire earth, the opener had to be a true human, a kinsman of Adam. The Apostle John watching the vision sobbed convulsively, because he understood this and saw no man worthy, until it was pointed out to him that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed to open the sealed scroll!

Because he was closely related to Elimelech (Naomi's deceased husband), Boaz was eligible under Hebrew law to serve as a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth and Naomi, just as Christ coming as a genuine man allowed His redemption of us. Boaz's gracious love of the Gentile Ruth reminds us of the gracious love that Christ has for the church. We were Gentiles, separated from God, but through grace, Christ redeemed us by His blood. He has redeemed us, and He has given us everything, just as Ruth gained all that Boaz had when he redeemed her and she became his.

Israel is not left out of this. Naomi is a blessing to Ruth, for without Naomi, Ruth would never have found her husband, just as we

(the church) without Israel would never have found our Redeemer and Husband, Christ. Furthermore, the marriage of Boaz to Ruth blessed Naomi, (returning her family's land and inheritance), just as the church through Christ is a spiritual blessing to Israel (allowing them to enter into their inheritance of their true Messiah unto salvation).

It is interesting that Ruth learned how to deal with the situation at hand from Naomi, just as the church can learn of God's plan of redemption through His dealings with Israel. It is also provocative that in the story, Naomi learns of Boaz through Ruth, just as those of Israel can only truly learn of Jesus Christ through the church (God's instituted mechanism to spread the plan of salvation). On the other hand, Ruth learned of Boaz's ways through Naomi, just as the church learns about Christ through the example of Israel in the Old Testament.

A review of prophetically relevant key concepts:

- In order to bring Ruth to Boaz, Naomi had to be exiled from the land but then brought back. In order to bring the Gentiles to Christ, Israel was exiled from the land (in the Babylonian captivity) but then brought back.
- What the Law could not do, grace accomplished (in both the Ruth story and at the cross). In the Ruth story, there was a kinsman nearer than Boaz who by Law should have accommodated her, but was unwilling. On the contrary, Boaz demonstrated grace in doing what the Law could not accomplish through his willingness to perform the redemption of the land and the levirate marriage.
- Ruth does not replace Naomi in the story. In similar fashion, the church is not a replacement to Israel in God's plan. Instead, each has a prophetic destiny. (Believing Israelites between Pentecost and the rapture are obviously in the category of the church.)
- Ruth learns of Boaz's ways through Naomi, just as the church learns of the ways of God through Israel.

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- Naomi meets Boaz through Ruth just as Israel can come to Christ through the church.
- No matter how much Boaz loved Ruth, he had to await her move. No matter how much God wants your love, He established free will, and will draw you but not force you to make a move towards Him.

Interestingly, the Book of Ruth in the Jewish community is conspicuous for its association with the Feast of Shavuot, also known as the Feast of Pentecost² – the first fruits of the wheat harvest. We recognize the fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost as being the birth of the New Testament church, which occurred on this feast, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Coincidence? Hardly!

We can see this Hebrew model of prophetic patterning vividly represented throughout the entire Bible, but especially in the Book of Ruth. The fact that the content and characters in the story strategically represent an ultimate future fulfillment recorded in the New Testament demonstrates the prophetic integration of the Bible.

As we transition into the next chapter, keep in mind what we have already discussed (the typology of Adam and Eve as well as the Ruth story) and how they anticipated the greater fulfillment (Christ and the church) in the mind of God.

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1. -Wikipedia contributors, "Goel," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goel> - Retrieved 5/30/18)
 2. -"The Book of Ruth," *Chabad.org*. (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2158/jewish/The-Book-of-Ruth.htm - Retrieved 5/28/18)

CHAPTER 6

THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION - DEEPER PERSPECTIVES

It is imperative that we, as followers of Jesus truly begin to recognize His objectives in a deeper way. In order to truly find out what He is after, we need to better understand the panorama of Scripture in a way that reveals His ultimate plan and desire – the redemption of a bride.

-Israel As A Bride:

First, we must take a closer look at the way God began to call out Israel as a nation in the Old Testament. You must first recognize that God began to draw Israel into a marriage covenant, which was performed at Mt. Sinai after being brought up out of the land of Egypt. When the 10 Commandments came forward, they were more than simply a list of “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” In the mind of God, the giving of the 10 Commandments was a marriage covenant between God and the nation of Israel – and actually, this is the way the Jews have always traditionally viewed it as well.

- God actually descended down to the mount to marry Israel (Exodus 19:9-11).

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- Moses acted as the minister between the Bridegroom and the bride (Exodus 19:3-7).
- Then the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20) were given as the vows between them, with the foremost vow being...

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

-Exodus 20:3

In other words, God was engaging Israel in a monogamous relationship by telling them, “I am your only Husband.” He made His vow to her, saying...

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

-Exodus 19:5-6

- After hearing all of these vows, the bride, being Israel, responds in agreement by saying...

“All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”

-Exodus 19:8

The bride says, “I do.” God married the nation of Israel there on Mt. Sinai. Through the exchanging of vows, a wedding ceremony was performed. In order to recognize that God truly was married to Israel, let’s now look to the book of Isaiah in order to gain more understanding.

“For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when thou wast refused, saith thy God.”

-Isaiah 54:5-6

Even through Israel's many whoredoms and unfaithfulness to the covenant she had agreed to with God, He still loved her and sought her repentance. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, said the following regarding the northern kingdom of Israel and her "treacherous sister" the southern kingdom of Judah...

"The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."

-Jeremiah 3:6-8

So, it seems from this passage that God actually divorced at least the northern kingdom. However, if we keep reading this chapter, we see in Verse 14 that God still considered Himself married to them, still sought their repentance, and even began to make them a promise of a future New Covenant and time in which they would walk in His ways...

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:"

-Jeremiah 3:14

So, we can see that God's ultimate plan involved a New Covenant, but He was still connected to Israel. But it was never the full intention

of God to ultimately be married to only one nation. His plan was that by working through Israel, He would eventually introduce a New Covenant, through which He would not only keep His promises to Israel, but be able to marry all of humanity, namely the church.

-The Church As The Ultimate Bride:

So, God was married to Israel, but His ultimate plan was to marry all of humanity (the church). However, by His own law, He was already bound by the law of marriage to Israel, and would not be married to two brides in the earth at the same time. What was He to do and still stay within the confines of His own law?

To understand the law of God regarding this, we will look into the New Testament, and see the commentary of the Apostle Paul speaking to the church on this subject.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

-Romans 7:1-3

So, we see the Apostle Paul telling us that the law of marriage is binding only while you are alive. So, by Jesus dying on the cross, He broke the marriage with the unfaithful wife, Israel, and by resurrecting He was free to marry another! You must understand that although divorce and polygamy are not expressly forbidden in the Torah, it is also clear that they were never optimal in God’s plan. We see this concept of these acts being unfavorable in God’s sight reflected clearly

in the New Testament as well. Whether there are acceptable reasons for divorce or not, the one true, clear way for remarriage to be permissible is in the case of the death of one of the parties.

This was one of the foremost reasons for the cross. You must not limit your understanding of the cross to simply a means of dealing with sin. Yes, the cross was to take care of the sin issue. But why did Jesus need to take care of the sin issue? The word sin means, “to miss the mark.”¹ What was the “mark”? The mark was marriage! Sin prevents us from enjoying intimate fellowship with Him. It creates a chasm between fallen man and the holy God. Jesus came to remove anything that prevented us from being able to marry Him!

So, in rising from the grave, Jesus was now free to marry. Now the problem was that we were not free. We were bound to the law of sin and death (Romans 8). Therefore, even though He was now free through death, burial, and resurrection, He could not simply marry us in our present condition. The true depth of the plan of God in action would be to liberate us from the fallen state of bondage to the law of sin and death. But He would have to devise a plan that would liberate us without killing us, since we all could not literally go to the grave in death and arise in resurrection to be free. We needed a formula that could allow us to obtain freedom through a death that would free us from this bondage but yet allow us to remain alive, being able to marry another. Paul explained the solution as he continued the above passage in Romans 7...

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

-Romans 7:4

So, Paul explained that the mechanism for us to become dead to the law of sin and death in order that we might also become free to marry Christ, is through the body of Christ, or the church. In other words, he is telling us that the way we entered into the body of Christ

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is actually the way we participate in this process whereby we become free to become married to Christ. Let's continue to read the writings of Paul in order to gain even more understanding as to how this might be accomplished according to the plan of God...

Paul gives us clarity in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

-1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Paul declares that the gospel is the mechanism by which we are saved. In this passage, he defines the gospel specifically as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He then in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 (and other passages), indicates that converts are required to "obey" the gospel.

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

-2 Thessalonians 1:8

It is not sufficient for you to only mentally believe that Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected. You must also obey the gospel, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:8 (and other passages). The specifics regarding obedience to the gospel will be discussed in the following chapter.

So, Jesus, by death, burial and resurrection was able to present Himself as being eligible to marry. And by this same method, He presented the church with a plan, which He devised, that would be effective in enabling us to also become free to marry Him. In the

following chapter, we will examine this gospel plan in more detail, as Paul expounds upon these concepts in his writings to the churches.

1. -Thayer and Smith, *The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon*, Greek Lexicon entry for “Hamartia,” *Bible Study Tools*. (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/hamartia.html> - Retrieved 5/5/18)

CHAPTER 7

THE GOSPEL - THE PLAN FOR BECOMING DEAD TO THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

In this chapter, we will discuss the gospel as being the plan for becoming dead to the law of sin and death that we might become free to marry Christ. Keep in mind that this will be a very brief overview of this subject. For more information on the gospel plan of salvation, please consult the companion study entitled, Basic Christian Doctrine: The Nature Of God And The Gospel Plan Of Salvation. With that said, let's begin...

In the earlier passages we examined, we saw how Paul was instructing us that we must become dead to the law of sin and death, which bound us, in order that we might become free to marry Christ. He further declares that the mechanism that accomplishes this is the "body of Christ," or the church. He then points to the gospel as being the means through which we are saved, and goes on to define it as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, he then declares that we must "obey" the gospel.

The question then becomes "how do you obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus?" The gospel is the plan established by Jesus whereby we undergo death, burial, and resurrection in symbol, but also receiving a kind of substance that will prove effective in accomplishing our freedom from the law of sin and death and enable us to

become free to marry Christ. This is the NT gospel salvation plan first given in Acts 2, which the Apostle Paul is now expounding on in his writings to the churches, understanding that they had already experienced it. He was now giving them greater understanding as to what they experienced as it relates to the mind of God in action. This plan was first detailed, commanded, and experienced at the birthday of the church, on the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2:38...

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

-Acts 2:38

Let’s briefly explore how Paul and Peter in their writings identified the Acts 2 experience on Pentecost as the gospel plan of death, burial and resurrection.

1.) Repentance = Death (to the old man of sin)

“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.

For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

-Romans 6:6-7

2.) Water Baptism = Burial (of those sins)

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:”

-Romans 6:4a

3.) Holy Spirit Baptism = Resurrection (as a new creature in Christ)

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quicken (resurrected) by the Spirit:”

-1 Peter 3:18

In the above passage, Peter, who delivered the first message of the church on Pentecost (Acts 2), wrote to the church, declaring that Christ’s resurrection was due to the Spirit in Him being alive. We can now understand that the Spirit baptism, first poured out on Pentecost, is that same element that causes new life (resurrection) in the believer!

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

-Acts 2:4

We can then understand Paul as he continues his teaching in Romans 6...

“that like as Christ was raised up from the dead (as Peter said, “by the Spirit”) by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (by the Holy Spirit).”

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (through the Spirit):”

-Romans 6:4b-5

So, Jesus, through death, burial and resurrection was able to present Himself as being eligible to marry another. And by this same method, He presented the church with the plan – this gospel plan which He devised, that was to be effective in enabling us to also

become free to marry. This plan, first put into action on Pentecost (Acts 2:38), the day on which He poured out the promised Holy Spirit, provided His prospective Bride – the church - with the means to become free from the law of sin and death in order that she might become free to marry another, even Christ!

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

-Romans 8:2

CHAPTER 8

THE GOSPEL - DEEPER INSIGHTS REGARDING THE MARRIAGE MODEL

The gospel plan that we detailed above relates specifically to the model of marriage in some fascinating ways. So far, in the previous chapter, we have established that the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and is also the mechanism by which we now become free to marry Him. We have also connected repentance, water baptism, and the Spirit endowment with being the symbolic (but also substantial) method through which we participate in this gospel plan through obedience. Now we are ready to take our understanding to further depths, as we will explore how these three individual elements of the gospel plan correlate with the marriage model. We will find out that all three have some astonishing depths of meaning in this regard, as they are each linked to some vital aspects of the marriage of Christ and the church. First though, let's examine the concept of "like kinds" and how we become "His kind" through this gospel process of spiritual regeneration.

-Becoming His "Kind":

You must first recognize that we cannot become Christ's bride while being unlike His "kind." In Genesis 1, the Bible describes the creation

of all types of living creatures upon the earth. For each type of creature God created, the Bible indicates that it was brought forth “after its own kind.” The word kind is used again in Genesis 6 when God instructed Noah to take two of every kind of land animal onto the Ark; and in Genesis 8 God commanded these animals to reproduce after the Flood.

In order for two creatures to come together in an intimate relationship that will bring forth offspring, they must be of the same kind. We recognize now that within the genetic code, there is opportunity for great variation within kinds, but also restrictions concerning sexual reproduction. Dogs, for example, exhibit tremendous variety. Yet, diverse breeds of dogs can produce offspring with each other - indicating that all dogs are of the same kind. Dogs will not interbreed with cats however, since they are of a different kind. It is clear that this Biblical understanding of a kind intends to express a group of like organisms capable of interbreeding and producing offspring¹. Modern science may use several different terms to classify this type of grouping.

You must keep in mind that in His natural essence, Jesus is a spirit being. Therefore, to marry we who are physical beings, He took on a physical body, and came and underwent physical death, burial and resurrection. Conversely, in order to marry Him, we who are physical beings will have to undergo spiritual death, burial, and resurrection. The only way in which we can become “His kind” spiritually, is through this regenerative plan, called the gospel. To appreciate this, you must recognize that Jesus claimed to be the firstborn of a new race (Spirit-filled believers)!

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

-Romans 8:29

In other words, Jesus was the first to undergo death, burial, and resurrection. In doing so, He laid out a plan that made it possible for

us to become His “brethren” through obedience to this plan. Never before was this salvation possible! Let’s now look into the specifics...

Luke records the birth of the church in the book of Acts. After the Holy Ghost fell on the believers in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, the crowd that gathered outside inquired as to the meaning of this. When Peter stood up and preached about how they had crucified Jesus their Messiah, they were convicted of their sin and asked what they were to do. They were given the following response:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

-Acts 2:38

This was the way the gospel was preached on the birthday of the church, and the record of Acts and the Epistles display a continual observance of this same message. We were never given any Scriptural command that retracts or alters this message. Repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost are the way that we spiritually partake in Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. In other words, as stated earlier, this is how we obey the gospel. Jesus developed a plan whereby He took the substance of the blow, allowing us to obey His death, burial and resurrection in symbol, but also receiving a kind of substance that would be able to elevate us into becoming a “new kind” in Christ.

-Death / Repentance:

We have already examined how at repentance, we “die” out to the old man of sin. This is the first step to becoming free from the law of sin and death, enabling us to be free to marry. Remember the words of Paul, equating death with freedom from the former law of bondage. This parallels the crucifixion of Jesus. In relation to the marriage model, it represents the bride “dying out” to her old identity in order to take on a new one. She entered as a single woman, but at the end of

the wedding ceremony she will be reintroduced with a new identity and a new name!

-Burial / Baptism:

As discussed earlier, Scripture tells us that baptism is the spiritual burial that believers will undergo with Christ. We understand from Acts 2:38 and 22:16 that baptism accomplishes the remission, or removal of sins. But many people limit baptism only to the removal of sins, and don't understand the deeper purpose of its requirement. Remember, any time baptism is mentioned, it automatically implies that the person has already repented. The entire purpose of baptism is that you understand you were wrong and have decided to walk in a new direction. That is repentance. And because you have decided this, you are willing to undergo baptism in obedience to the commandment of the Scriptures, in order that those sins may be forever remitted. In other words, burial always follows death – just as baptism follows repentance.

But you must recognize that repentance and baptism are not simply for the removal of your sins, but they are also necessary because you must undergo spiritual death and burial to the old man in order to be free from the law of sin and death so that you can rise in resurrection to marry Christ! Baptism is required. It is not optional or secondary. If you do not undergo this death and burial, you cannot become free to marry! You cannot fulfill the purpose of salvation, which is to become the bride of Christ!

So, when we go down under the waters of baptism, in the name of Jesus, we then die to the law of sin and death, and we rise now to walk in the newness of life, because we are free to marry another! As mentioned earlier, at the end of the wedding ceremony, a woman dies out to her old identity as she is reintroduced with a new name. This taking on of a new name in the gospel plan takes place here at baptism, as the convert goes down in water as the name of Jesus is invoked over them. At baptism, you effectively take on the name of Jesus.

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That's why it is necessary to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

-Colossians 3:17

Baptism is an act of both word and deed. If we do not apply this instruction at baptism, one of the most critical events in the life of a believer, how do we then apply this instruction at all?

Furthermore, we see in Acts 4...

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name (Jesus – Verse 10) under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

-Acts 4:12

Jesus is the only name in which we are saved. It is not surprising then that throughout Acts and the epistles, we only read of converts being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ – and never in the titles. Why is it so important that His actual name is invoked at baptism?

In order to understand this as it relates to marriage, you must realize that when a marriage takes place, traditionally the woman will take on the name of the man she is marrying. Understand that this tradition was started by God, as recorded in Genesis 5:2...

"Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

-Genesis 5:2

Notice that He called their name Adam. He called them both Adam. This was the institution of the tradition of the bride taking on the name of the husband. It's not just a cultural thing; it's actually a Biblical thing!

So, when you submit yourself to baptism in Jesus' name, you go down into the water with one name, but when you come up out of the

water with the name of Jesus Christ being pronounced over you, you are actually taking on His name as your new identity! If you are going to become His bride, then you must take on His name through baptism!

The Greek word for baptize is “baptizo” (Strong’s #G907), and means, “to immerse or submerge”² – which is why the early church only baptized by immersion (never by sprinkling or pouring).

The Biblical term “name” - when speaking of God - implies more than just a label. We can say that it refers to His character, identity, purpose, and majesty.^{3 4}

So, by being baptized into Jesus’ name, you are actually being immersed, and submerged into His character, into His identity, into His purpose and into His majesty! If you have been baptized into any name or group of titles other than the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have not taken on the name of your Bridegroom – Jesus Christ – as Scripture commands.

-Resurrection / Holy Ghost:

We will now examine the gospel plan in reference to the resurrection of Jesus, and examine how we are to take part in His resurrection in symbol, but also receiving a substance that will enable us to become His kind.

In order to understand the depth of this plan regarding resurrection, you must recognize this from the cultural traditions of that day. In Biblical times, according to the law, one reason that a marriage was seen as invalid was if the marriage had never been consummated. This means that if there had not been sexual intimacy in the marriage, the marriage was incomplete.

With any covenant, there were three requirements:

- Speech (an oath)
- Witnesses
- Blood, a Meal, or Sacrificial Giving (an exchange of an object or property)⁵

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In terms of a marriage covenant, speech refers to the wedding vows, witnesses refer to the legal witnesses required for the wedding contract to be valid, and blood referred to virgin sexual intercourse that would cause spots of blood to be produced on the bed sheets during the consummation. In the Hebrew culture of the day, they wasted no time with this. After the consummation of the marriage through intimacy, the bloodied sheets would be used to confirm to the entire community that the marriage was sealed.⁶

Without intimacy, there is no marriage. So that's why it's not enough for you to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name, you must also receive the gift of the Holy Ghost as a type of intimate consummation. Let's hear Paul in Romans 8:9...

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

-Romans 8:9

In other words, you could have believed, repented, and been baptized, but yet if you have not had the Scripturally distinct experience of receiving His Spirit, it's "marriage off."

The sexual relationship between a man and woman typologically represents holy intimacy. When the two become one flesh through sexual union, this represents the kind of oneness God wants to experience with His bride. Spirit-filled believers experience these sensations during worship. In fact, one of the Greek words used for worship is "proskuneo," which actually means, "to kiss" (Strong's #G4352).⁷

You must recognize that if you are seeking the infilling of the Spirit, the necessary foreplay is worship. God then fills those who willingly open up to His presence until there are no words to express the ecstasy of His love. You will spontaneously break forth speaking in unknown tongues during your powerful union with Him, being completely lost in the moment.

You must recognize that the tongues of the Holy Ghost represent a type of intimate "pillow-talk" between yourself and your lover, Christ.

Psychologists will speak of this pillow talk as being a type of code language involving special words, names, and phrases used for each other that nobody else is able to understand.⁸

So, the Lord instituted the tongues of the Holy Ghost as an intimate love language which you can use to commune with Him at any time, without anyone else knowing what you're saying!

"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

-1 Corinthians 14:2

The believer is filled with the glory of God as the endowment of the Spirit into man takes place.

So, the Holy Ghost is the intimate consummation of the marriage. Through the consummation of the marriage, and the repeated consummation of the marriage, you keep the marriage intact.

The infilling of the Holy Ghost is what gives you the power and ability to walk in the newness of life. It is the Spirit of Jesus that now indwells the believer. Because you have His Spirit, you are now "His kind" in a way not possible before! In terms of consummation, this happens as a part of the gospel plan of salvation. However, the ultimate "consummation" with Christ will take place when He returns for us to bring us back to His Father's house in heaven for the actual wedding celebration. At that time, we will receive new bodies like His (1 John 3:2), and be able to take part in a closeness with Him that is impossible in our current state of being.

To go even deeper, we need to examine Ephesians 1:13-14 in order to gain some more understanding regarding the Biblical parallels between the Holy Ghost and the wedding customs that have come down to us over the years.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

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Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

-Ephesians 1:13-14

In other words, the Holy Ghost is the down payment on heaven, and seals us until the day when Jesus returns to receive us. Understand that the word "earnest" ("arrabon" - Strong's #G728) speaks of a down payment ("earnest money").^{9 10} The Holy Ghost is our down payment on heaven.

Through this down payment of the Spirit, we experience the intimate consummation with Christ, as discussed earlier. How does this concept of a down payment relate to a wedding? The down payment in a wedding is the engagement ring. The bridegroom gives his bride-to-be an engagement ring as a symbol that she is betrothed to him. She keeps this ring as her proof of the engagement agreement until the time of the wedding ceremony. So, it is a type of down payment that through having possession of the ring, she is "sealed" with his promise of betrothal until the wedding.

So then according to the words of Paul, the Holy Ghost is also the engagement ring, and we are sealed by it. The engagement ring shows that we belong to Him, until He comes back to redeem us when He returns ("until the redemption of the purchased possession").

By taking part in the gospel plan of salvation, which Jesus Christ made available through His death, burial, and resurrection, we are able to fulfill the purpose of our creation – to become the pure, righteous, and holy bride of Jesus Christ!

So, we have examined the necessity of participating in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in symbol. Through this process, He became free to marry. In similar fashion, we, through repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost now become free. At repentance, we died out to the old man of sin, and through baptism we buried those sins, completely freeing us from the bondage of the law of sin and death. Through baptism, we also take on the name of our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The receiving of the Holy Ghost is the intimacy between the bride and the Bridegroom. It is a type of the

consummation of the marriage covenant, but is also the down payment – or engagement ring – on our inheritance of heaven. It is this engagement ring of the Holy Ghost that seals us with His identity until He returns.

In the next chapter, we will endeavor to look deeper into some of the ancient Hebrew cultural aspects of the day, in order to get a better understanding of the depth of meaning present in the plan of God. It is astonishing to recognize the degree of depth and precision in which God implanted prophetic meaning into the Hebrew customs regarding marriage. Let's now get a better understanding of these ancient Hebrew wedding customs, which God established, in order to gain a fuller sense of meaning as to how they deliberately anticipate the future marriage of Christ and the church.

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CHAPTER 9

THE HEBREW WEDDING RITUAL - A PROPHETIC FORESHADOWING OF THE ULTIMATE MARRIAGE: CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

It may startle you to discover the treasures hidden in the wedding rituals of the ancient Hebrews, which God instituted. It is astonishing to recognize that everything that God has said about His marriage to His bride, the church, was anticipated thousands of years earlier in the institution of these customs. As we have mentioned throughout this study, that fact is a profound piece of evidence that the author of the Bible is not bound to the constraints of time as we are. Rather, it is profound proof of His reality, and demonstrates His origin to be from outside of time. These insights we will examine also demonstrate the integration of the Bible, which is another proof that demonstrates its Author to be from outside time. Because the Bible is composed of 66 books, written by over 40 authors who mostly didn't know each other, over an almost 2,000-year time span, to then discover that it is thoroughly integrated down to the subtle nuances is a proof of its extra-dimensional origin. Furthermore, the fact that its human authors could not have understood the true depth of meaning behind the "types and shadows" embedded into their inspired writings is a fact that echoes its inspiration from outside time.

This content of this chapter should continue to amaze you concerning God's precision in that regard. Not only does this provide

a profound awareness regarding our prophetic perspective, but it also demonstrates the incredible love and affection with which God views us. At face value, most of these insights are not obvious to the modern reader. However, by becoming in touch with the Hebraic roots of the Bible, we can better comprehend the depth of anticipatory design embedded into both the Biblical record and the ancient Hebrew culture.

All through the Gospels, Jesus relied on the ancient Jewish wedding pattern for many of His parables (Mt. 22:1-14, 25:1-13), climaxing in His Bridegroom's promise in the Upper Room in John 14. We will explore these references within this study in order to recognize the full importance of these allusions. Unfortunately, many of us miss seeing the full depth of meaning by our modern unfamiliarity with the model of ancient Jewish wedding rituals.

The Jewish wedding involved a number of important rituals typologically correlating with the marriage of Christ and the church. We will investigate 17 of them. The following are not necessarily in strict order, yet they follow the general process of the ancient Hebrew wedding. Let's begin to examine these astonishing parallels...

1.) Erusin - Betrothal:

The first step in a Hebrew marriage was betrothal (erusin).¹

Betrothal involved the establishment of an engagement covenant (te'naim), leading up to the marriage covenant (ketubah), as initiated by a prospective bridegroom (chatan). The ketubah is the final document that stipulates all expectations and conditions for the marriage between the husband and wife.²

Jesus explicitly refers to Himself as the Bridegroom in the following passage in Mark.

“And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber

fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.”

-Mark 2:18-20

So, Jesus identifies Himself as the Bridegroom. The following verse tells us that, like every Jewish bridegroom, Jesus came from His Father’s house and travelled to the home of his bride (kallah).

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world:”

-John 16:28a

So, Jesus emphasized that He as the Bridegroom had come to earth, from His Father’s house, to find Himself a bride. We see from the above passage in Mark, and others, that He makes it clear He will at some point leave, and later return for His bride, as was the normal betrothal custom. It was normal for the bridegroom to often take the initiative in establishing a marriage covenant.

-Key Parallel:

- In ancient Jewish culture, in order to initiate betrothal, the prospective bridegroom would travel from his father’s house to the house of the prospective bride.
- In like manner, Jesus left His Father’s house in heaven and “travelled” to earth (through the Incarnation), the home of His prospective bride, the church.

2.) The Mohar – The Bride Price:

Upon arrival at the home of the young woman, the prospective bridegroom would negotiate with the woman’s father as to the bride price (mohar – Strong’s #H4119) he must pay to “purchase” his bride, as

was the custom (Gen. 24:53, 34:12, Ex. 22:15–16, 1 Sam. 18:25, Hos. 3:2).³

On a practical level, since the Father was losing a valuable member of his household (the bride), and had spent considerably to raise, feed, and house her since she was young, the mohar paid to the father was to help compensate him for these costs.

Jesus understood – because as God, He established this tradition – that He could not simply obtain a wife without paying a price (a mohar) for His bride. The necessity of a mohar is one of the most overlooked reasons for His death. You must recognize that He died not only to be free from the law of marriage with Israel, but He died also in order to present a mohar to His bride, the church.

In order to understand this, you must recognize that you as a believer have been purchased (redeemed), as the aforementioned passage in Ephesians 1 describes...

“...until the redemption of the purchased possession...”

-Ephesians 1:14

So, as the bride, Christ has purchased us. We will discuss shortly what He used to pay for, or redeem us. But to understand the true depths of this, you need to see this from the cultural aspects of that time. In the ancient customs, it was not only necessary to simply present a mohar to the woman’s father, but you had to present a suitable mohar according to the woman’s social status (1 Sam. 18:23).

For example, if you were marrying a commoner or a peasant woman, you may present sheep and chickens and goats to her father in order to demonstrate to him that you are capable of providing for her on the level in which she is used to living. However, if you were marrying royalty, you would present gifts such as silver and gold and costly garments. But yet, if you were marrying distinct royalty, in which the woman was able to trace her royal lineage back a certain number of generations, you may be required to present exotic gifts from around the world. You must meet her on her social level.⁴

In order to properly understand the cross, you must recognize that

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the cross was meant to express to you your social status from God's viewpoint...

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed (purchased) with corruptible things, as silver and gold..."

-1 Peter 1:18

Jesus made it clear to you that the objects normally given to earthly royalty as a mohar were far beneath what He considers your status to be. Peter implies in Verse 18 that even valuable earthly items such as silver and gold would actually be an insult to present to His bride.

So then, what did He use to purchase us? In order to express to us how unique and special we are to Him, He came up with something to present as a mohar that was unique only to Him. Something nobody else would be able to duplicate, which would express to us our true status in His eyes. The following verse (Verse 19), tells us...

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

-1 Peter 1:19

So, we understand that what He devised as a mohar for the church was His own precious, sinless blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot!

It was because of this purchased price, that Paul wrote the following to the church...

"...know ye not that...ye are not your own?"

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

-1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Key Parallel:

- The prospective bridegroom would negotiate a mohar to pay the bride's father in order to establish a marriage covenant whereby the woman would become his betrothed. The value of the mohar would be on par with the social status that the woman had.
- Jesus, through His death on the cross, paid the mohar that was needed (His own sinless blood) in order to atone for the sins of all mankind that began with Adam. He thereby purchased the church as His betrothed with a mohar of incomparable value, indicating to her the true social status that she possesses in His sight.

3.) Shiluhin – The Dowry:

A dowry (shiluhin, or in later Talmudic terms, nedunya or nadan) is a transfer of parental property, gifts or money at the marriage of a daughter. A dowry contrasts with the related concept of a bride price or mohar. While a bride price or mohar is a payment by the groom to the bride's parents, a dowry is the gift of wealth transferred from the bride's family down to the bride. She would bring this gift with her into her new marriage. In other words, it was a wedding gift from the father to his daughter, the bride.⁵

Upon leaving her father, the daughter received this shiluhin as a parting gift. This concept is mentioned in passages such as Genesis 24:59, 29:24, 29, and 1 Kings 9:16.

In light of this definition of a dowry, consider the following passages, which seem to describe the Holy Spirit as the “dowry” being given to us from the Father...

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,
that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it

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seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

-John 14:16-18, 26

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you (speaking of the Holy Spirit): but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

-Luke 24:49

In the previous chapter, we compared the Holy Spirit to the modern practice of the bridegroom giving the bride an engagement ring as a type of down payment on the wedding. But in terms of the ancient Hebrew wedding practices, the Holy Spirit seems to also parallel the concept of the dowry, being that it comes from the Father and is given to the bride.

Key Parallel:

- The father would present to his daughter, the bride, a dowry of value that she would bring with her into the marriage.
- The Father, God presented the Holy Spirit to the bride as a dowry that would seal her until the time of her redemption.

4.) Shiddukhin – The Proposal:

Shiddukhin can be defined as the early stage of the marriage process in which the man and woman consensually promise to marry each other in the future.⁶ The Talmud refers to the marriage proposal as shiddukhin.⁷

In ancient times, much of the negotiation of the ketubah was

between the prospective bridegroom and the woman's father. However, this could not be completed without the woman's willing consent. The bridegroom would have to approach the woman in order to gain her agreement to marry. The betrothal could not be complete without the woman's consent.⁸

"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."

-Genesis 24:58

As became customary, the man would pass a cup of wine to the woman, symbolizing covenant agreement. If the woman did not pick up the cup and drink, she was refusing him. But if she picked up the cup and drank from it, she was accepting his marriage proposal.^{9 10} After the bride accepted, the family would partake in a festive meal in celebration of the covenanted marriage.¹¹

Acceptance of the marriage to Jesus is a decision that can only be done with one's willing consent.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

-Revelation 3:20

And just like the bride did not initially choose the groom, we did not choose Christ.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..."

-John 15:16a

So, like the ancient Hebrew brides, we simply consented to the marriage proposal. Regarding the drinking of the cup and the celebratory meal, let's understand Jesus at the Last Supper speaking to His disciples...

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“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

-1 Corinthians 11:25-26

In other words, Jesus was assuming the position of a Bridegroom, telling His bride-to-be that by the drinking of the cup, she is agreeing to His marriage proposal. He establishes this tradition of the Lord’s Supper meal to commemorate and celebrate the marriage. And just as the earthly bridegroom would leave after the bride’s agreement, in order to go prepare a place for her, and then later return, our heavenly Bridegroom instructed us to do this in remembrance of Him until He returns for us. So, you should recognize that participation in the tradition we call “communion” is in actuality a symbol of the acceptance of the marriage covenant with Jesus.

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Jewish bridegrooms would obtain marital consent from the bride through the partaking of a drink of wine. The family would then celebrate the agreement with a festive meal. She did not choose him; he chose her, and she agreed.
- Jesus established the tradition of the Lord’s Supper for His bride the church, indicating to her that through the drinking of the cup of wine, and the eating of the bread, she is commemorating her agreement to His marriage proposal. We did not choose Him; He chose us, and we agreed.

5.) The Ketubah – The Marriage Covenant:

Once the price was paid, and the bride had accepted, the marriage covenant (ketubah) was established. The ketubah included documentation of the mohar, dowry, and the mutual obligations between the bridegroom and bride.¹²

The ketubah also details the husband's obligation to provide his wife with the necessities she needs – food, clothing, shelter, etc. These are obligations originally demanded in the Torah (Ex. 21:10).¹³ Additionally, the ketubah lays out the financial resources and possessions each person brings into the relationship, the responsibilities of each family to the other, and finally the penalties to be paid should either side break off the covenant.¹⁴

We understand that the Old Covenant, or giving of the Mosaic Law to Israel on Sinai, was a marriage covenant or ketubah. So then, we understand that the New Covenant (or New Testament – the B'rit Chadashah) acts as the ketubah for Christ's bride the church. Let's examine how...

Jesus Himself sets the conditions for the marriage:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

-John 15:10-13

Jesus speaks of the required obligations:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

-John 13:34

Jesus outlines His commitment to the relationship:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

-Matthew 28:20

These are only a few of the many elements contained within the New Testament – our betrothal contract – that Jesus gave to His bride.

Key Parallel:

- The ketubah was the marriage contract that contained details regarding the mutual obligations of the bridegroom and bride.
- As a Bridegroom, Christ gave the church a legal document containing all of the provisions of the New Covenant – the contract detailing our marriage relationship with Him.

6.) Kiddushin – Sanctification:

From the establishment of the ketubah and forward, the man and woman were regarded legally as husband and wife, although the marriage ceremony had not yet been performed and therefore the marriage could not yet be consummated (Mal. 2:14, Mt. 1:18-19).¹⁵ At this time, the bride was declared to be consecrated or sanctified – set apart – exclusively for her bridegroom. This is reflected in one of the Hebrew words for betrothal – “kiddushin,” which literally means sanctification or consecration.^{16 17}

In the same manner, the church has been declared as being consecrated, sanctified, and set apart exclusively for Christ...

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

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.

-Ephesians 5:25-27

Key Parallel:

- From the time the marriage was covenanted at the establishment of the ketubah, the woman was considered consecrated, sanctified, and set apart only for her bridegroom.
- The church, as the bride, is declared to be sanctified, cleansed, and set apart exclusively for her bridegroom Christ.

7.) Kesef – Bought With A Price:

Within the Hebrew tradition, being “bought” is not thought of as though the woman was being purchased like property, but rather the transaction is meant to confer a “change of status.” There are two ways of purchasing something in Jewish law: by cash (kesef) or by barter (chaliphin). When something is purchased by barter, what has transpired is simply an exchange of property. However, when a transaction is made for cash, the transaction can also effect a change of status. The Talmud records emphatically that a woman cannot be married through a barter transaction, because this would imply a change in ownership, and would give the woman the status of a chattel (a possession, or personal property).¹⁸

However, for a cash (kesef) transaction, one does not actually have to use cash. Any article of value can be used, such as a coin, a ring, a jewel, etc., and it must be given for its monetary value and not as barter. The bridegroom is changing the bride’s status from

that of a single woman to that of a married one. The money is merely a legal consideration that makes the woman's new status binding.¹⁹

Jewish tradition teaches that in God's marriage to Israel in the Old Testament, the wealth of the Egyptians was the "cash" used to seal the betrothal upon the exodus from slavery (Ex. 12:36). Here too, God was not "buying" the Israelites, but transforming their status to that of the Chosen People.²⁰ So, during the betrothal period, the Hebrew brides were considered to be "bought with a price" (the bride price, or "mohar").²¹

In like manner, the church is considered "bought with a price," that price being the perfect blood of the atoning death of Christ.

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body,
and in your spirit, which are God's."

-1 Corinthians 6:20

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew brides were considered "bought" with the mohar – the bride price – once the ketubah was agreed upon.
- The church, as the bride of Christ, is considered "bought with a price," that price being the spotless, sinless blood of our Bridegroom Christ.

8.) Mattan – Love Gifts:

During the betrothal period, it was common for the bridegroom to present his future bride with special gifts (mattan), displaying his appreciation for her. They were also intended to help her remember him while he was away during the long betrothal period.²²

“Ask me never so much dowry and gift (mattan – Strong’s #H4976), and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.”

-Genesis 34:12

In like manner, Jesus presented His bride, the church, with a number of unique gifts only applicable to her. Some of the gifts that Jesus gave us are the nine Gifts of the Spirit that are accessible only to those who are filled with the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12). These gifts given to the church are of a supernatural nature, reminding the church of the supernatural marriage to be performed one day with a supernatural Bridegroom.

Key Parallel:

- During the long betrothal separation, the ancient Hebrew bridegrooms would present their future brides with special gifts that showed his affection for her. They would help her to remember him while he was away making preparations for the wedding.
- Jesus, our Bridegroom, left His bride the church a number of supernatural gifts that only she has access to. These gifts help us operate in the Spirit during the long betrothal absence, and will stay with us until He comes for us again.

9.) Mkudeshet – The Betrothed Bride:

After the marriage covenant was established, the bridegroom left his bride at her home and returned to his father’s house, where he remained separated from his bride for a period of time. A typical betrothal period would last about 12 months, but could be up to 2 years.^{23 24}

Interestingly, Scripture compares 1,000 years to 1 day to help

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convey God's perception of time. We have been without our Bridegroom for almost 2,000 years (since 33 A.D.).

Notice how the following passage tells us that to God, 1,000 years is like a day, and notice the context – His return. Also, notice how the church – the bride – is addressed as “beloved.”

“And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

-2 Peter 3:4-8

This period of separation would allow the bride time to gather her trousseau and prepare for married life.²⁵ During this time, she prepared herself for the marriage. She likely had saved up money all her life for this time. She would purchase expensive perfumes, cosmetics, and clothing and keep herself well prepared should the bridegroom return. Because she did not know exactly when he would return, she had to be in a state of constant preparation and readiness!

During this betrothal period while she awaited his return, she is referred to as a *mkudeshet* – one who is betrothed, sanctified, and dedicated to another.²⁶ This is how we, the church and bride of Christ are supposed to await our Bridegroom's return. Paul talks about our betrothal separation period in the following passage...

“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.”

-2 Corinthians 11:2

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew brides would await the return of their bridegrooms over a betrothal period of about 1-2 years. The bride was separated and dedicated to her bridegroom throughout this period. During this time, they would make all preparations for the inexact time of his return and be ready to leave with him when he arrived.
- As Christ’s bride, the church has endured nearly 2,000 years awaiting her Bridegroom. During this time, she is told to stay separated and dedicated to Christ only, and eagerly await His return. Now is our time to make the necessary preparations, as we will have to be ready to depart with Him immediately at the rapture – the catching away of the church. Since we don’t know exactly when this will occur, we must remain ready at all times!

10.) Cheder – The Bride Chamber:

Concerning the pre-wedding preparations made by the bridegroom, much would need to be completed before it would be time to receive his bride. Once back at his father’s house, he would begin the task of the construction of the cheder – the bride chamber, typically as a room added onto his father’s house. The bridegroom would normally leave the bride by promising that he was going back to his father’s house to prepare a place for her, and that he would then return to receive her at an inexact time in the future (typically about 1-2 years).²⁷

The construction is examined and approved only by the father. When the father was satisfied with the construction, he would give his

son permission to go and receive his bride. Therefore, the timing of the bridegroom's return was inexact and unknown, especially to the bride. She would just have to be ready on an ongoing basis.

In like manner, Jesus, before His crucifixion, made the promise of a bridegroom to His disciples who would soon become the foundation of His future church. He had been warning the disciples of His coming departure and death, and gave them a comforting promise...

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

-John 14:1-3

This was Jesus' first promise of what the disciples would later learn to recognize as what we call the rapture, and He presented it using the phraseology of a Bridegroom. The word “mansion” here in Greek refers to a lodging, a dwelling-place, or a room (mone - Strong's #G3438).²⁸

Concerning the timing of His return, just as any Jewish bride, the church does not know the exact time. His return is simply imminent, and the church must maintain constant readiness.

So, Jesus, as a Bridegroom, is promising His bride that He will prepare a room (or bride chamber) in His Father's house, for us to consummate the marriage with Him. And we must remain ready for the unknown hour of his return!

Key Parallel:

- Once the bridegroom returned back to his father's house, the construction of the bride chamber would be initiated. This room would typically be added onto the father's house. The bridegroom would have left his future bride by

promising that he was going to prepare the bride chamber for her and would be back to receive her at the appointed time.

- Jesus, in like manner, declared His intention to make this very preparation during our long betrothal period while we, His bride, await His return to receive us. He promised that He would return to receive us at the appointed time.

11.) Mikvah – Baptism:

The bride would also be required to partake in a cleansing bath (mikvah). Mikvah is in effect, the Hebrew word used for baptism, referring to a reservoir of water. To this day, a conservative Jewish bride cannot marry without a mikvah.²⁹ This ritual purification indicates a separation from a former way to a new way. In the case of marriage, it indicates leaving an old life for a new life with your spouse.

In like manner, Jesus commanded us to be baptized both in the physical sense, by immersion in water in His name, but also promised a Comforter that would come. He let us know that this Comforter was His very own Spirit called the Holy Ghost, which the believer would become spiritually “baptized” into.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

-Acts 2:38

“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he (Jesus) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:”

-Luke 3:16

Although there are many other passages that discuss both Spirit and water baptism, we recognize that the two above verses are repre-

sentative of the New Testament commands regarding baptism. Jesus spoke of a new birth experience consisting of both Spirit and water baptism (John 3). However, it is imperative to recognize that water baptism specifically, is an absolutely necessary requirement, just as a cleansing mikvah was for the ancient Hebrew brides.

Jesus, through the writings of the Apostle Paul, declares the following saying, concerning His bride...

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”

-Ephesians 5:25-26

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew brides, as well as many modern Jewish brides, were required to cleanse themselves in a purifying ritual mikvah prior to the wedding.
- Jesus commanded His bride, the church, to be cleansed and have our sins washed away in the waters of baptism, but also to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

12.) Shoshvinin – The Wedding Procession:

One of the important preparations for the wedding is choosing the members of the wedding procession or party (shoshvinin). The wedding party would include the best man, the maid or matron of honor, the ushers or male attendants, and the bridesmaids or female virgin attendants. In ancient times, an individual member of the wedding party was known as a shoshvin.³⁰³¹

In addition to the wedding party, there would also typically be a large number of guests that would attend. The guests could include members of the family and those in the community.

Scripture gives us some indication as to the identity of at least one of the shoshvinin in the heavenly marriage between Christ and the church. John the Baptist, one of the last Old Testament Jewish saints, identified himself as the “friend of the Bridegroom” (John 3:29), or in modern terms, the “best man.”

“He that hath 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

In other words, John the Baptist does not claim to be part of the bride. We understand this further by Jesus’ statement in Matthew 11:11...

“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

So, Jesus made it clear that there was coming a group, of which John was not a part, of whom even the least would be greater. We understand later that this is due to the Holy Spirit endowment in each member of the church. Jesus therefore, makes a clear distinction between OT saints and the church. John was one of the last OT saints, and was not a part of the church. Instead, John (knowing this) identified himself as the “best man.”

What about the wedding guests? To speculate on who they might be, we must ask the question, “who else will be in heaven that is not part of the bride?” The most likely candidate group is the Old Testament saints. The souls of the Old Testament saints (though yet unresurrected) will be in heaven.³²

So, it is possible that the wedding guests may be the souls of the Old Testament saints. They are the friends of the Bridegroom, who are likely also among the ones invited as guests to the later marriage

supper (which we will discuss later) upon receiving their resurrection bodies (Dan. 12:2, Mt. 8:11).

Key Parallel:

- In ancient times, any typical wedding party would have a best man, as well as a number of male and female attendants for the bridegroom and bride. There would be a large number of guests from the families and surrounding community who would attend and celebrate the wedding.
- Scripture describes John the Baptist – one of the last OT saints – as the “best man.” We can then make an educated guess as to the identity of the other wedding guests. Jesus called John the greatest man of the OT period, and therefore it makes sense why he is the “best man.” So then if he were the greatest of the OT saints, it would make sense that the souls of the other OT saints would be the wedding guests.

13.) Nesuin – The Taking of the Bride:

When the marriage chamber was ready, the father inspected it, and if it was suitable, he would tell his son the bridegroom that he could go receive his bride! This was typically done by a procession consisting of the bridegroom in festive attire and accompanied by his male escorts, called minyan – Strong’s #H4510 (Judges 14:11, Jeremiah 7:34).³³ The bridegroom and his procession would often approach at night, conducting a torch-lit procession to the home of the bride.³⁴

Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the exact time of his coming. To maintain her readiness, she may keep an oil lamp lit through the night. As the procession approached the home of the bride, at a distance, a shofar (a ram’s horn trumpet) would be blown, and there would be shouts to alert the bride that “the bridegroom cometh!”^{35 36}

She would be prepared and ready, and would use these last

moments to gather her belongings and be ready to immediately leave with her bridegroom. We see something similar in Song of Solomon...

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one,
and come away."

-Song of Solomon 2:10

The arrival of the groom at the bride's house signaled his intention of "taking her to wife." This act of "taking" or in a sense romantically abducting the bride was referred to as *nesuin*, which literally means "taking."³⁷

And that's the romantic part - all Hebrew brides were "stolen." The Jews had a special understanding of a woman's heart. What a thrill for her, to be "abducted" and carried off into the night, not by a stranger, but by one who loved her so much that he had paid a high price and made great preparation for her.

The bride is escorted by procession back to the bridegroom's Father's house in a bridal litter or palanquin called an *aperion* in Hebrew (Strong's #H668). This *aperion* is mentioned in Song of Solomon 3:9-10...

"King Solomon has made for himself a palanquin (*aperion*)

From the [cedar] wood of Lebanon.

He made its posts of silver,

Its back of gold,

Its seat of purple cloth,

The interior lovingly and intricately wrought

By the daughters of Jerusalem."

-Song of Solomon 3:9-10 (AMP)

After the groom and his wedding procession received his bride together with her female attendants (virgin bridesmaids, Ps. 45:13-15, Mt. 25:1-13), the enlarged wedding party would then return from the bride's home back to the groom's father's house (Gen. 24:67).³⁸

Just as the bridegroom would come for the bride at any time, often

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at night, and with a shout and sound of the shofar, in like manner, the Lord will return as a Bridegroom for the church. And just as the taking of the bride was accomplished by a procession of the groom and male escorts from the groom's father's house to the home of the bride, so the taking of the church will be accomplished by the Bridegroom, Christ, along with a procession of angels from the "Father's house" in heaven. Let's read the passage again with this in mind, giving us even more understanding...

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

-1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

-John 14:3

Key Parallel:

- At the time appointed by the bridegroom's father, a procession would be conducted to go and abduct the bride! Often, this would be done at night, by the light of torches. The bridegroom, flanked by his attendants, would approach the bride's home. As he drew near, shofars would be sounded, and they would shout to alert her that he was coming! Upon arrival, the bride would be taken by the procession, lifted up and placed in a bridal litter, and brought back to the bridegroom's father's house amidst great rejoicing.

- At the time appointed of the Father, Jesus – our Bridegroom – will appear at a time unknown to us (maybe at midnight) with a shout, a trumpet, and a procession of angels to lift us up and “rapture” us out of this world and bring us back to His Father’s house for the wedding ceremony!

14.) Kallah – The Bride:

On the wedding day, the bridegroom – and especially the bride (kallah) – would be elaborately clothed. From ancient times, Jewish couples would be treated like royalty on this day. The bride and groom were both given bridal crowns to wear.³⁹

“Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.”

-Song of Solomon 3:11

So even from this ancient account in the Song of Solomon, we recognize that it was customary for the bride and groom to wear crowns on the day of their wedding.

The wedding day is the bride’s special day, and she is treated accordingly. It is also a very ancient custom for a Jewish bride to sit on a “throne” at her reception.⁴⁰ From ancient to modern times, every Jewish bride is bedecked like a queen. The Jewish Midrash speaks of twenty-four adornments mentioned in Isaiah 3:18-24 that were customary for the ancient Hebrew brides to be beautified with on their wedding day.⁴¹ Everything was done to make the bride as lovely as possible for this special day.

“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.”

-Isaiah 61:10

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The bridal imagery in the following excerpt from Ezekiel 16 is also indicative of the majestic preparation and adornment of the ancient Hebrew brides, describing the marriage between God and Israel...

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.

Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.”

-Ezekiel 16:8-14

So, we understand that on her wedding day, an ancient Hebrew bride was treated like she was a queen at her coronation.

One of the most exciting of the wedding preparations for the bride is choosing her wedding dress. As in most modern cultures, the traditional color of the wedding gown for the ancient Hebrews has always been white, denoting purity from sin.⁴²⁴³

Concerning Christ and His bride the church, we find the same bridal imagery described. We find that both Christ and the church will be wearing crowns. The following passage from Revelation 14

describes the Bridegroom, Christ, coming out of the bridal chamber to visit judgment upon the earth – and He is wearing a crown...

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”

-Revelation 14:14

The church is also promised a crown at this time...

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

-2 Timothy 4:8

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

-1 Peter 5:4

We also find that like the ancient Hebrew couple on their wedding day, the description of the church's future is portrayed as being royal...

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”

-1 Peter 2:9-10

The following passage tells us of the royal nature of the Bridegroom, Christ...

“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.”

-Revelation 19:16

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So, the identity of the Bridegroom is that of the highest royalty conceivable. If the church is His bride, then the church is going to be the bride of the most royal and magnificent wedding that has ever taken place. The church is marrying the pinnacle of royalty!

Like the Hebrew brides, the church will also sit on a throne...

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

-Revelation 3:21

We also find that the bride, the church, is given her white wedding dress...

“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.

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.”

-Revelation 19:7-8

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew couple being wed was treated like royalty on their wedding day. They sat on “thrones” at their reception. They were dressed in magnificent wedding apparel and were given crowns. The bride was bedecked in a beautiful white wedding gown.
- The bride of Christ, the church, is also royalty, as she will be married to the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” This will be a royal wedding of the highest magnitude! She will wear a crown, be seated on a throne, and have on a white wedding gown.

15.) Chuppah – Concealed in the Wedding Chamber:

Upon their arrival at the father's house, the bridegroom would take his bride to the wedding chamber (chuppah – Strong's #H2646) in the cheder (Strong's #H2315), or room he had prepared (Psalm 19:5, Joel 2:16).⁴⁴

These terms chuppah and cheder may be used interchangeably, but for our purposes here, we will define chuppah as the wedding chamber in which the marriage would be consummated through physical union. The tradition of the chuppah is one that has changed and evolved significantly over time, but is still in use today in a modern form in contemporary Jewish weddings. Today, the tradition of the chuppah is represented by a canopy under which the bride and groom stand during the wedding ceremony (often in the form of a cloth upheld by four poles).⁴⁵⁴⁶

But in ancient times, it was in this chamber that the couple would spend seven days hidden away while the wedding celebration continued for that entire week (Judges 14:12). This is referred to as the “seven days of the chuppah.”⁴⁷

There, in the privacy of the chuppah, the bride and groom entered into physical union for the first time. The bridegroom's best man would wait outside the door of the wedding chamber. When the marriage was consummated through their intimate union, the bridegroom would tell the best man through the door, and he would go and announce it to the assembled guests. Now you understand John the Baptist in John 3:29...a passage we examined earlier...

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom (or the best man), which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”

-John 3:29

Upon hearing the good news, the wedding guests remained in the

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groom's father's house for the next seven days, celebrating with a great wedding feast.⁴⁸

The modern practice of yichud is the custom of the married couple enjoying a short period of privacy after the ceremony.⁴⁹ This custom also seems to look back to the ancient practice of having seven days concealed in the chuppah.

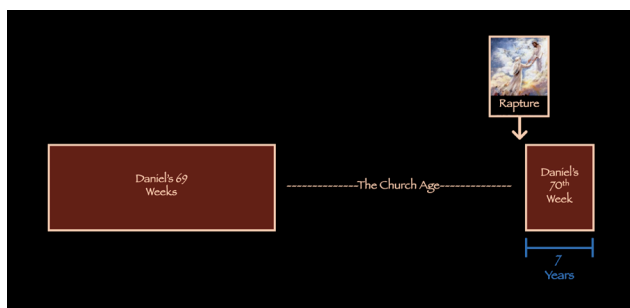
The Shiv'at Y'mei Mishteh, or Seven Days of Feasting, are said to have been ordained by Moses, and are a custom that is thought to go back to patriarchal times. These feasting days serve as a focal point for communal rejoicing and for the couple to begin their married life together while in the lap of the community. This practice is still observed by traditional Jews today. In modern Jewish practice, during the Seven Days of Feasting, the bride and groom do not work, nor may they be involved in business transactions of any kind. They only eat, drink, and rejoice with each other. Each day, close relatives or friends host the married couple for a festive meal, which is punctuated by singing and rejoicing.⁵⁰ This modern practice is taken from the ancient Hebrew wedding tradition of the seven days of concealment in the chuppah, while the wedding guests celebrated in the father's house for the entire week.

Like the ancient Hebrew brides, Scripture seems to describe a bridal week for the church in which we will be in the wedding chamber with our Bridegroom, Jesus. Biblical eschatology (or the study of the end times) describes a final 7-year period of time that is connected with the Jewish people specifically (Daniel 9). This chapter in Daniel describes time in periods of "weeks," which is a common Hebraic expression for a period of seven (in this case, years).



This time period is also described thoroughly in Revelation, and some refer to it as the Tribulation. This final 7-year "week" of time,

especially the last half of it (called the “Great Tribulation” by Jesus in Matthew 24:21), is a time of unparalleled distress, and is characterized by the wrath, or indignation of God. Pre-Tribulational eschatology, (which turns out to be the eschatological perspective that best aligns with the typology of the Jewish wedding) asserts that Scripture teaches that the rapture, or catching away of the church, will happen prior to this seven-year period. So, according to that pattern, while the Jewish people’s final “week” is taking place on earth, Jesus and His bride, the church, will celebrate their marriage “week” in our heavenly chuppah, hidden away from view!



Though the church was unknown to the Old Testament audience, we seem to find some prophetic allusions that may refer to the heavenly chuppah in the following passages...

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”

-Isaiah 26:20-21

This passage describes a special group of people being brought into God’s “chambers,” for a period of time, until the “indignation” (an OT term for the Tribulation) is over. It then describes the Lord coming out

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of “his place” to punish the inhabitant of the earth, which we know will happen at His Second Coming at the end of this final week of time. In other words, this passage could mean that we will be safely concealed in our heavenly wedding chamber with Christ for one “week” (in other words, seven years), while the Tribulation is happening on earth. At the end of these seven years, Christ returns to earth at the Second Coming to bring justice and establish His Millennial Kingdom.



The same theme of the Lord coming out of His chambers to visit judgment on the earth at this time is spoken of in Joel 2, speaking prophetically of the “Day of the Lord.” It then speaks of a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and a bride from her chuppah.

“And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

...

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

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

-Joel 2:11, 15-16

It’s difficult to imagine this passage referring to any group other

than the church when it describes a bride coming out of her chuppah. Passages later in Scripture describe the Lord, whom the New Testament calls the Bridegroom, returning with His bride, the church, at the Second Coming.

Let's examine another prophetic OT passage that points to a select group of God's people avoiding the Tribulation in the Day of the Lord by being concealed.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

-Zephaniah 2:3

It would seem as though this passage is referring to the same group of people who are protected (or exempted) from the Tribulation by being hidden in God's chambers (the Isaiah 26:20 passage). We know from later New Testament passages that the church is not appointed to God's Tribulation wrath, and will be kept from that time period altogether – making the church a likely candidate for this group of people. The following passage written by Paul to the church identifies this same period of the "Day of the Lord," and specifically identifies the church as being exempt from it.

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

...

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

...

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

-1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4, 9

Note: Some feel that these passages we just examined may refer to the remnant of Israel being hidden in the wilderness before the

Second Coming. We believe there are many clear reasons why this is not the case, and instead refers to the church being hidden away as the pure, righteous bride that is exempted from the wrath of the Bridegroom. Let's quickly examine this before moving on.

One of the most glaring reasons why the group being hidden cannot be Israel, is because the passages are clear in describing these hidden ones as a righteous group who is exempted from the wrath. To the contrary, Israel at this time can hardly be considered righteous, which is the very reason why she must enter and endure the Tribulation. One of the purposes of the Tribulation is to drive the Jews to repentance, so that toward the end of it there will be a remnant who finally cries out unto Jesus Christ, finally acknowledging Him as their Messiah, which then prompts His return to save them from destruction.

This hardly fits in with the narrative of a righteous group playing the role of a pure virgin bride being hidden away from the wrath. The Old Testament is clear that Israel up until that point was playing the role of the harlot unfaithful wife, not the unmarried pure virgin bride. Meanwhile, the New Testament clearly depicts the church as the righteous and pure virgin bride of Christ who will avoid the coming wrath.

Another verse describing ones being hidden during this period is Psalm 27:5. It could also refer to the bride. However, if there was a passage that did possibly refer to the Jewish remnant being hidden in the wilderness at the end of the Tribulation, I would suspect it could be this one, for a number of reasons.

"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

-Psalm 27:5

This is a potentially prophetic verse describing being hidden during "the time of trouble." This is another term describing the Tribulation period in the Day of the Lord, also called the "time of Jacob's trouble" in Jeremiah 30:7...

“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

Again, this is a passage also referring to the same time during the Day of the Lord. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, was the father of the twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words, this passage is saying that the nation of Israel will go through this Tribulation period, though at the end, they will be saved. We see that this remnant of Israel who is saved at the end of the Tribulation is referred to in Zechariah as well...

“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”

-Zechariah 13:8-9

If the Jews were the hidden group referenced by the earlier passages, then how could they be called righteous before entering the chuppah when this passage in Zechariah makes clear that it will require the refining fire of the Tribulation in order to produce the righteousness of the Jewish remnant at the end of the Tribulation?

So, we see that God will save the Jewish remnant at the end of the Great Tribulation. In fact, as we mentioned earlier, we find that one of the main purposes of the Tribulation is to drive Israel to repentance. Their repentance and turning to their true Messiah turns out to be a pre-condition for Christ’s return to earth (the Second Coming) with His bride to set up His Millennial reign.

“I (God speaking) will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

-Hosea 5:15

This word “early” actually means “earnestly.”⁵¹

So, we’ve taken a brief detour through eschatology to explore and understand this aspect of end times prophecy that fits in (from a timing perspective) with the typology of the Jewish wedding rituals, and seems to clearly reveal the church as that righteous bride being hidden away before the time of trouble, who then returns with her Bridegroom when it is passed.

Before moving on to the next point, let’s do a quick review of the key parallels involving the chuppah.

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew brides were “abducted” by their bridegrooms, and carried by procession to the father’s house. Upon arrival at the father’s house, the ancient Hebrew bridegrooms would take their brides into the privacy of the wedding chamber – the chuppah – for seven days. In the privacy of the chuppah, they would consummate the marriage through intimate union. The bride would then stay concealed in the chuppah for the remainder of the week, as the guests celebrated.
- The bride of Christ will be raptured, or lifted up off the earth to be carried away to our heavenly wedding chamber where we will spend “one week” (seven years), concealed and hidden away with our Bridegroom. While the bride of Christ is in the bridal chamber with Jesus, the rest of the world will face seven years of Tribulation.

16.) Mishteh – The Wedding Feast:

After seven days in the wedding chamber, the ancient Hebrew bride and bridegroom would emerge and participate in a wedding feast

(mishteh – Strong’s #H4960) with their guests. The bride’s veil would be removed so that everyone could see her, and she would be presented to the guests and to the community. The end of this feast would conclude the wedding celebration.⁵²

In like manner, following the seven years in our heavenly chuppah while the Tribulation was taking place on earth, Jesus Christ will return to earth (the Second Coming) with His unveiled bride, the church, to vanquish His enemies, establish His Kingdom, and also celebrate with a marriage supper.

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

-Revelation 19:9, 11-14

Here in Revelation 19, we see that following the seven-year Tribulation, Jesus will return at His Second Coming with His unveiled bride to earth to execute judgment on earth and then participate in the “marriage supper of the Lamb.” We know His bride is with Him, as we see her described as being “clothed in fine linen, white and clean,” which was the description of the bride given only a few verses earlier in Verse 8:

“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.”

-Revelation 19:8

As mentioned earlier, we also find Old Testament prophetic mention of Christ at His Second Coming being described as a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber, bringing His bride with Him:

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.”

-Joel 2:15-16

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”

-Isaiah 26:20-21

Key Parallel:

- The ancient Hebrew bridal couple would emerge after seven days hidden away in the chuppah and participate in a wedding feast with their guests.
- After the seven years in the heavenly chuppah, Jesus Christ will come out of His wedding chamber as a Bridegroom, bringing His bride the church with Him – to also celebrate with a marriage supper.

17.) Yachad - A New Life Together:

The Hebrew word yachad meaning “togetherness” or “unitedness” (Strong’s #H3162), is an ideal description for the just-married couple as they begin their new life together as one.⁵³

The Old Testament describes this togetherness as follows...

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

-Genesis 2:24

Since the very beginning of the Biblical tradition, the thought regarding the marital union was always one of unity and togetherness. The two people become one, through marriage.

Following the seven-day marriage celebration, and marriage feast, the bridegroom and his bride would go to the home that the bridegroom had previously prepared. They would begin their new life together as husband and wife.

As a future married couple, Christ and the church will also be brought together as one. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, actually quotes the passage we just looked at from Genesis. Notice how Paul first describes the unity and togetherness of Christ and the church, and then reveals that the Genesis 2:24 passage’s deeper meaning is to act as a type of Christ and the church...

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

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.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

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.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

-Ephesians 5:25-32

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At the end of the final 7-year “week,” just as the bridegroom and his bride would leave the marriage supper to go to the home the bridegroom had prepared, so Jesus and His bride will depart for their new home, the New Jerusalem (though this city’s appearance seems to be post-Millennial).

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

-Revelation 21:2-4

The New Jerusalem was beautifully adorned as a bride, John said, because it will be the eternal home of Christ’s bride. The author of Hebrews told us that the patriarchs looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, and that a heavenly city was being prepared (Hebrews 11:10, 16). He goes on to say that the church is seeking the “heavenly Jerusalem” and “the city to come” (Hebrews 12:22 and 13:14).

The Scriptures noted throughout this study make it clear that the bride is the church and that the city called the new Jerusalem is being prepared for the bride of Christ. The bride of Christ will then be with her Bridegroom for all of eternity.

“...and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

-1 Thessalonians 4:17b

Key Parallel:

- After the marriage week and the feast, the ancient Hebrew couples would begin their new lives together in the home that the bridegroom had prepared. They would exhibit togetherness and unity – being considered “one” through marital union.
- The relationship between Christ and the church is one of togetherness and unity. We are considered part of His body, and we are to cleave together as one. Following the final “week” on earth and subsequent marriage feast, Christ and His bride will finish out the Millennium and then continue into the eternal state together forever.

-Conclusion:

As we close out our examination of this topic, keep in mind all of the incredible typological parallels between the ancient Hebrew wedding traditions and the marriage of Jesus Christ and His bride, the church. In this review, we aimed at representing the key parallels, but we certainly acknowledge that many additional wedding subtleties are also embedded within the Biblical text – possibly some waiting to yet be discovered!

From the pattern of the ancient Hebrew wedding practices, we see that, like the bridegroom of ancient times, Jesus came to the home of His future bride for the betrothal, established a covenant with His bride, sealed it with a glass of wine, paid for the bride price with His blood, sanctified her, and sent His bride gifts of the Holy Spirit. We, the betrothed (Christ’s church) currently await the return of our Bridegroom to abduct us away to the wedding chamber (at the rapture) to spend seven years hidden away with Him (while the Tribulation occurs on earth). We will then celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and following the Millennial reign on earth, depart with our Bridegroom to our eternal home, the new Jerusalem!

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Our task at hand is all about readiness. Just like the ancient Hebrew brides waited and prepared during the long betrothal period for their bridegroom's return, we must also wait and prepare for the soon return of our Bridegroom, Christ.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

-Revelation 19:7-9

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CHAPTER 10

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IN ETERNITY

In our previous chapters, we've been able to clearly see a number of things from the Scriptures...

1. God was married to Israel (the Old or Mosaic Covenant)
2. Israel broke the covenant, although God still said He was married to her.
3. A New Covenant was promised, in which He would "get Israel back."
4. Jesus Christ came to establish the New Covenant, which was initiated on Pentecost with the establishment of the church.
5. The church – the mystery hidden throughout the Old Testament – was the first to receive this New Covenant, and is described in the New Testament as the pure, virgin bride of Christ.
6. The church will exist on earth until the rapture, when she is miraculously removed sometime prior to the seven-year Tribulation.
7. At the end of the Tribulation, a remnant of Israel turns to Christ as their Messiah and He returns to save them, then

establishing the Millennial Kingdom in which many Old Testament promises to Israel will be fulfilled (including them as a nation receiving the New Covenant).

Several questions begin to jump out at us as we examine these observations from Scripture, especially in light of our understanding of the future timeline of eschatology (or the end-times)... questions such as the following...

When will God get Israel back? Will she be back as a wife/bride, or will she just be saved? Is the church equivalent to the bride even into eternity? Or is the church only the current representation of the bride? In other words, is the church a temporal classification for a grouping within the bride? Will the Tribulation remnant of Israel, as well as Gentile Tribulation believers one day be part of the wife of God? Will Old Testament saints one day be part of the wife of God? Does partaking in the New Covenant in the Millennium join believers to the church, or is the church a select group within New Covenant believers? What is the ultimate eternal destiny of the church? Will the church always have a distinct and elevated position as the bride or wife of Christ, even into eternity? Or will all believers of all generations receive the New Covenant and be joined together in the New Jerusalem, being corporately referred to as the wife?

Some of these questions may be difficult to answer dogmatically, and we must be careful to not let our opinions dictate our beliefs. We must rely on Scripture, but the problem is Scripture doesn't seem to specifically answer all of these questions. Some of these distinctions are not sharply defined for us, especially when it comes to the future eternal state. But let's try to gain some perspective with what we do know...

According to a number of prophecies, a remnant of national Israel will return to God just before Jesus Christ returns to the earth at the Second Coming and begins the Millennium of peace. During the Millennium (or Messianic Kingdom), the many Old Testament promises made to Israel that remain unfulfilled will be fulfilled,

including her receiving the New Covenant as a nation. Obviously, the New Covenant was first made available at Pentecost, but as a nation, Israel has not yet acknowledged her Messiah, Christ. She as a nation has not yet received this covenant. These New Covenant prophecies found throughout the Old Testament prophets will reach their ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium as the remnant nation of Israel will be saved and she will finally fulfill her calling as being a light unto the nations.

This New Covenant promise to Israel is seen for example, in Jeremiah 31, and it is in the context of them breaking the Old Covenant. This passage describes God establishing a new covenant, or basis of relationship that will be everlasting, and will be received by all of national Israel. This fulfillment obviously has not happened yet, but rather points to a Millennial fulfillment.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that 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 bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

-Jeremiah 31:31-34

So, although the New Covenant was initiated at Pentecost, it has not yet reached ultimate fulfillment for Israel. They will receive the New Covenant in the Millennium.

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This Millennial context of the New Covenant outpouring is obvious even in Joel 2 – another prophecy of the New Covenant. This was the passage the apostle Peter quoted and applied to Pentecost when he stood up and preached after the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2...

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

-Joel 2:28-32

Earlier in this chapter was one of the verses we examined in a previous chapter in this study, where we witnessed the bridegroom and the bride emerging from their wedding chamber following the Tribulation...

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.”

-Joel 2:16

So then, it is obvious that the prophecy of the New Covenant Spirit outpouring in Verses 28-32 then pictures a Millennial fulfillment for national Israel. So, we should recognize that although Pentecost was a

partial fulfillment of this prophecy (as the New Testament authors clearly do apply it to Pentecost), we expect to see its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium as national Israel is restored to God under the New Covenant.

But Scripture also seems to picture Israel's restoration in the context of the marriage between God and Israel. The future restoration of Israel as the wife of God is pictured in Isaiah 54...

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

-Isaiah Chapter 54

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This is a clear prophetic picture of Israel's future regathering and restoration following the discipline of the Tribulation. Through this period of divine discipline, the rebels are purged from Israel and she is brought to faith in her Messiah. God's plans for Israel are not finished! He will get her back! In the New Testament, the apostle Paul makes reference to this in Romans 11...

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

-Romans 11:25-29

Paul explains that once the church age (or the "fulness of the Gentiles") has been completed, God can then turn and get Israel! He then quotes an Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 59:20 to prove that God still has a plan to restore Israel as a nation. He then explains that although in the 1st Century context, they were enemies of the Christians, that nevertheless, God would still one day get them back as a nation.

We also see that Isaiah 62:4-5 and Hosea 2:14-23 seem to in some way picture Israel's future reunion and restoration to God in the context of a marriage covenant being reinstituted – which we know will be the everlasting New Covenant in the Millennium. We won't read through these passages here, but we encourage you to examine them for yourself.

This was just a brief excursion though some of the more relevant passages related to Israel's restoration under the New Covenant in the

Millennium. There are many other key passages we could examine as well, all leading us to this same conclusion – Israel will absolutely be restored in some way, and these passages do seem to imply that it will be as a wife. But most of the questions we posed earlier still remain unanswered. For example, does this mean restored Israel and the church will be the same? There currently are distinctions between Israel and the church, but will these distinctions exist into eternity?

We know that the New Covenant is described as an everlasting covenant (Jeremiah 32:30, Hebrews 13:20, et al.). In other words, this is the final covenant and all who enter eternal life will enter on the basis of this ultimate covenant. This then brings to mind the question of those who were saved prior to the outpouring of this covenant – such as the Old Testament saints. Will they be resurrected to also partake of this covenant in the Millennium? We know that they will be resurrected, but could it be that they were saved retroactively without needing to receive it in the future? These are legitimate questions that we may not be able to answer dogmatically, as Scripture doesn't seem to give us clear answers. But there are many more questions we can ask...

For example, does receiving the New Covenant make one part of the church? Well, it does currently in our present church age – but will it in the future such as the Millennium, once the church age is closed after the rapture? Or, are believers of all generations saved through the New Covenant, while the church (those from Pentecost to the rapture) is destined to always enjoy a special place among New Covenant believers as the unique wife of Christ? Or, do all believers in the ultimate New Jerusalem become the wife of Christ/married to God? If the New Jerusalem is the final destination of the believers of all of earth's ages, then at that time, will there still be the distinct groups called "the church" and "Israel"? Or, are they only relevant as distinct groups until the end of God's dispensational plan for mankind that closes with the ending of the Millennium? And as the Eternal State (involving the New Jerusalem) begins, is there a merging of all believers of all the ages now into the eternal wife of God, as they have now all partaken of the New Covenant? In other words, does every-

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thing culminate and come together at the New Jerusalem? Is this what Paul meant in Ephesians 1:10?

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:”

-Ephesians 1:10

Well, what are we told about the New Jerusalem? Let’s take a look at Revelation 21...

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

-Revelation 21:2-3

Later in that same chapter, it says...

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,”

-Revelation 21:9-10

We know that the city itself is not the bride, but rather it is the abode – or ultimate destination – of the bride. This passage is like someone saying, “let me show you the President,” and he then brings you to the White House. The White House is not the President, but it is the abode of the President. So, in order to see the President, you must be taken to the White House.

The New Jerusalem is the eternal home for the bride. But again, is

this just for the church, or is it the destination of all the saved of all generations? This is the same heavenly city whose builder and maker was God, that Abraham looked forward to seeing (Hebrews 11:10), and it will become a reality – He will see it, although he was not part of the church. Does this tell us anything? We know God has prepared this city for all those of faith who are one in Christ and who have their names in the Book of Life (Hebrews 11:16; Revelation 21:27).

So then, does this mean that all of the saved of all generations who live in the New Jerusalem will be part of the wife of God? Some feel that Paul's statement that we read in Ephesians 1:10 does mean that all believers of all time are brought together as the wife of God for all eternity, and the New Jerusalem is their collective dwelling place. Or could it be that the New Jerusalem is the home of all believers, but yet the church will still be distinct as the bride or wife? You will have to come to your own conclusion!

The reality is that the Bible doesn't sharply define these future groups, especially within the context of the Eternal State. Scripture doesn't seem to clearly answer these questions – likely for good reason. That reason probably being, that it really doesn't concern us at this point. We really don't "need" to know. The Bible gives us everything we need in order to successfully live for God, but it simply doesn't address some of these questions specifically.

So, although there are questions that we may not be able to answer dogmatically, we thought it important to include this chapter. If nothing else, these questions should help us to expand our thinking and recognize that there still are many mysteries that we may not have the full specifics about. Eternity is still a picture whose details are not sharply visible for us.

But with that being said, we should rest assured that if we believe in Christ and obey His gospel, we are among the most privileged believers of all time. We – in this current church age dispensation – are able to take advantage of the New Covenant Spirit indwelling that places us into the bride of Christ. We will have the unique privilege of being raptured – caught up – or romantically abducted by our Bridegroom, Christ, who will take us to our heavenly chuppah for the

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marriage ceremony. We will then return with Him at His Second Coming, and be there by His side to rule and reign with Him during the Millennial Kingdom and eat with Him at the Marriage Supper. We will then be there with Him in the New Jerusalem that follows in the Eternal State – and so shall we ever be with the Lord!

CHAPTER 11

THE WORK OF THE LORD VS. THE LORD OF THE WORK

Let us now begin to transition our focus to the modern-day church. With this backdrop of understanding now in place – that we are Christ’s betrothed awaiting His return, let’s take a closer look at some practical applications of that knowledge.

The ultimate purpose of the information conveyed within this study is to establish the correct mindset and thinking within the church. Without the benefit of understanding God’s purpose from a panoramic viewpoint, it is easy to have human priorities that do not align with God’s priorities. We must learn to think like Him. One of the primary Biblical examples of misplaced priorities is portrayed in Jesus’ experience with Mary and Martha. We find this account in Luke 10:38-42...

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him,

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and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

-Luke 10:38-42

Martha placed primary emphasis on the work she was doing “for the Lord,” but Mary was commended by Jesus for placing her emphasis in the right place – on spending time with Him (relationship). It is imperative not to become too busy with the King’s work and not have time for the King.

Often within the church, it is common for individuals to consider church related positions or ministries as their primary focus and driving force in life. These may include soul winning (in other words, witnessing and spreading the gospel to others), preaching, teaching, music, or involvement in other areas of ministry. However important these areas may be, it is essential that you as a believer recognize that these are not the primary reasons for your existence and they should not serve as the basis of your self-worth or self-validation. Your primary reason for existence is to know God for yourself, and through knowing and experiencing Him, to then become like Him. The purpose for this, is that your ultimate destiny is to become the bride of Christ.

When you become intimate with Jesus, you will become the wife that “gives birth” to the things of God into your life. For example, by becoming the intimate wife of Christ, “offspring,” or souls will inevitably be born as a byproduct of your intimacy. Soul winning is designed to be a byproduct of intimacy with Christ, just as physical reproduction is a byproduct of intimacy in a marriage. You must keep in mind that the focus is the intimacy with your Lover, not producing a baby. Just like you do not get married for the purpose of having a baby, you do not get saved to win souls. The focus is knowing your Lover, Christ, in an intimate way.

The focal point after receiving salvation is that you would, through an intimate ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ, continually mature as a believer, becoming more and more like Him. You must learn not to place ministry, or any other task on the same level as relationship with Jesus. Whatever area of ministry God has intended for your life is intended to simply be the byproduct of your love for Him. In other words, because you are so in love with Jesus, that love then compels you to do that which would please Him (ministry, etc.).

Here's how it works. You can only love Him to the degree that you know Him. As you grow in relationship with Him, you fall in love with Him more as time goes by. When you fall in love with Jesus through intimate relationship, you will inevitably fulfill John 14:15.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

-John 14:15

Notice that the emphasis here is on the love, not the keeping of the commandments. Keeping His commandments is pointless if you are doing it because, for instance, someone is pressuring you. It is also pointless if you are doing it for another person's approval, or so that they will think highly of you. The correct motive – which is the only motive that will please God – is doing it because you love and want to please Him.

Rather than focusing on rule keeping, the love you develop for Him will become the factor that will naturally motivate you to the action of obedience. Because He created us, and therefore knows how we optimally function, He has established some "commandments" for us to help ensure our success in fulfilling the purpose of our creation. These commandments also act as marriage vows, helping to ensure that we have a healthy and thriving relationship with Him. In other words, it is all based on love and knowing what's best for us.

This is also echoed in John 21:15 in a similar way, only this time specifically directed toward areas of ministry...

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“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.”

-John 21:15

Notice again that the central motivating factor here is love. That is why we perform ministry. Because we love Jesus, our love motivates us to become involved in the things that matter to Him, such as helping others enter into covenant with Him. When we love Jesus and begin to become more like Him, we begin to think like Him. His priorities then become our priorities.

Often, power-seeking and abusive ministries exist specifically because they are not fueled by love. They are instead fueled by things like pride, control, and power. Individuals conducting “ministry” in this way likely have not emphasized intimate relationship with Christ in their own lives, and therefore they don’t think or act like Him. To use a metaphor, these individuals are arriving at the wrong destination because they have not understood the purpose for the journey in the first place.

So, Jesus makes it clear to us that our motivation for ministry, soul winning, or any other aspects of living for Him must have their foundation in our love for Him. If we are doing it for any other reason, such as for gaining attention or recognition from people, God is not pleased. He not only cares about what you do, but He also cares about your motives.

“All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight,

But the Lord weighs the motives.”

-Proverbs 16:2 (NASB)

You must recognize that a true Godly ministry never seeks to “own,” force, or manipulate God’s people. They should not overreach their authority into the lives of individuals. They should be careful to only act in ways that edify.

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.”

-1 Peter 5:3

By trying to coerce, force, or scare someone into doing or believing something through tactics of manipulation or fear, you are missing the whole point of serving God – God is only pleased if it is done willingly and from the heart.

True Godly ministry is careful with how they treat God’s people, knowing that the church is His beloved bride and His body. The church is referred to as the body of Christ (Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 3:6 and 5:23, and Colossians 1:18 and 24), coming from the understanding that upon marriage, the husband and wife become one flesh (Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:8).

Abusive ministries often seek to roughly manipulate God’s people into abiding by their own man-made interpretations, standards, and convictions. They often major on the minor things, trying to force people to share their exact views on even trivial matters, instead of allowing individuals to be led by the Spirit and arrive at their own conclusions on these types of conviction-issues and non-essentials of the faith. And like many abusive situations, these abusive “ministers” claim that they are doing it to help people and because they love them!

They end up supplanting Jesus as the head of the church and replacing His headship with their own. They seek to become the bridegroom instead of Christ. To the contrary, godly ministers must be loving and gentle with Christ’s bride. Part of love of course includes teaching and explaining sound Scriptural truth – however, it must be done with a spirit of gentleness, integrity, and moderation.

Relationship with Jesus Christ is the highest calling in the universe. Knowing Jesus (and not “having a ministry” or owning anything material) is the highest achievement you can ever attain. The reason we desire souls to be saved and ministry to be performed is simply because God commissioned it. Why did God commission it? Because He wants a wife! As members of His bride, we all are like

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small cells in the body of Christ, and it will take all of us together to become a fit bride for Christ! You must remember to place priorities in their due order, according to the mind of God. Relationship with Jesus is always first. Because of our love for Him, that love compels us to do His work, which we call ministry. But the fuel that fires the doing of the work is the love and intimacy we share with the Lord, our Husband.

The apostle Paul gives us the understanding of the entire ultimate purpose of the ministry in 2 Corinthians 11:2...

“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.”

-2 Corinthians 11:2

The entire ultimate purpose of the ministry is to present the church as a righteous and pure virgin bride to Christ. Every action taken in ministry should have this ultimate goal in mind!

Note: Often, men become uncomfortable when trying to picture themselves as a part of the “bride” of Christ. You must recognize that there is no distinction between male and female when it comes to this. We, as true believers, are all part of His bride, and it is the highest privilege imaginable. Men, you are brides of Christ. Women, you are “sons” of God (John 1:11-12, et al.). We should recognize that the earthly, physical conception of marriage between a man and a woman is just a type of the ultimate relationship the church will have with Christ. The truth is that our earthly concept of marriage cannot even fully convey the type of relationship we will have with Christ for eternity. Gender is irrelevant when it comes to idioms that attempt to convey higher spiritual relationships.

So, to recap, we need to recognize that God is after devotion, not just doctrine. We cannot allow ourselves to place more emphasis on the work of the Lord than on the Lord of the work. And we should not confuse spending time with the work of the Lord with spending time with the Lord of the work. Our entire mindset should be what Paul said in Philippians 3:8-11...

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

-Philippians 3:8-11

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

Through this study we have traversed some of the most precious depths of understanding regarding our undeserving privilege of having a personal intimate relationship with the Creator of the Universe. To apprehend the profound love that He had for us to come and endure the cross in order to enable us to approach Him in relationship is nothing short of mind-blowing. When you then recognize the lengths that He went to in order to establish types, shadows, and patterns anticipating this love relationship, it demonstrates to you His desire from the very beginning – you.

To see this in the Word of God, let's re-examine the following passage from Revelation 19, as the story of the Bible reaches its climax...

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath 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 saints.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

-Revelation 19:6-9

So, in this passage we can see that the ultimate pinnacle of the plan of God is finally taking place – the Bridegroom has His wife!

Based on our exploration of this topic throughout this study, we should recognize the following points:

- The bride of Christ is the central theme of Scripture and the ultimate purpose of creation.
- The bride of Christ is the focus and culmination of natural history.
- The bride is the true identity of the church, both corporately and as an individual believer.

Recognizing these things should accomplish several outcomes in your personal life as a believer:

1. As mentioned throughout this study, the way the Bible has been skillfully engineered to prophetically portray all of the typology that we have only scratched the surface of, should leave you with a sense of awe as to God’s viewpoint of you as an individual.
2. You should then recognize the profound implications that these prophetic elements have on the way you view the Bible. These deliberately embedded typological subtleties reflect the integration of the Biblical text and require that it have a common Author – One of extra-dimensional origin. These characteristics are not only proof of His reality, but demonstrate the reliability and the authenticity of the collection of books we call the Bible.
3. And finally, the concepts we’ve examined throughout this study should propel you into a lifelong quest to discover

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Jesus Christ and to experience Him for yourself. It is a call to marital intimacy. You will discover that there is nothing more rewarding in our entire existence than experiencing a passionate pursuit of the presence of the One who created us for that very purpose!

May God bless you in Jesus' name!

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