

THE BRIDE AND THE BRIDEGROOM

MEDITATION

INTRODUCTION

Revelation 22:17 – the Spirit and the Bride say “Come”.
verses 7 & 12 repeat that Jesus is coming QUICKLY!
He is coming from His Bride.

Matthew 9:15 – Jesus identifies Himself as the Bridegroom.

Ephesians 5:25 – Paul makes the correlation of the relationship between the husband and wife to Jesus and the Church (Bride).

Revelation 21:9 – The Bride is the wife of the Lamb.

Romans 4:10-11, 17 – Abraham is the Father of the Bride.

SEQUENCE OF JEWISH WEDDING:

The Proposal:

The Bridegroom, known as the “Haton” takes the initiative. Jesus is always first! He always takes the initiative towards us.

The Haton leaves his home and comes to the home of the bride. He doesn't care how prepared she is when he comes. He accepts her just the way she is. He comes to propose marriage because he loves her. Likewise, Jesus came to our earthly home from His to express His love for us!

The Haton wears a leather pouch in which he carries three things when he arrives at the prospective bride's home to propose. These three things are:

1. a marriage contract
2. a wine cup
3. bridal gifts

The Marriage Contract:

It was also known as the “Katouba”. It contains the provisions, requirements and price to be paid for the bride. The “bride price” or “Mohar” was a price set by the Bridegroom’s father and not the bride’s. It was usually very valuable and costly. It was the “redeeming value” of the bride.

In I Peter 1:18-19 it says that we are “redeemed....with precious blood...the blood of Christ.”

The “Mohar”, however, required agreement by both the Groom and the Bride’s father. Jesus, our Groom, has already accepted the price for us. He believes we are worth it!

The Wine Cup:

By setting out the cup the Groom is indicating “I choose you”. Then he awaits her response. If she does not drink from the cup, she is indicating her rejection of his proposal. But, if she drinks from it, she is announcing her acceptance of the terms of the contract.

The marriage contract is sealed by the sharing of the cup. The union is now legal. They are now truly and officially married. Only death could break the contract. This is why covenant marriage includes the phrase “until death do us part”. It was a permanent relationship. She was willing to keep herself just for him.

The Gifts:

Now the Groom reaches into the pouch once again and takes out the bridal gifts to present to her. Usually, these are jewels to adorn her, like an engagement ring. In Acts 2:38, we are promised the “gift of the Holy Spirit” and He Himself, includes many gifts. (I Corinthians 12:8-10)

In the Jewish contract, the groom was responsible to provide a suitable home for the bride. He would do this during the preparation time. After the gifts are given he prepares to leave. When he gets to the door He says “I go to prepare a place for you and I’ll come back to get you”. These are the words that Jesus speaks to us in John 14:2-3.

Time of Preparation:

The Groom:

The separation may be as long as 3 years but was a minimum of one year. He returns to his father’s house and adds a room for his bride. He adorns it and stocks it for seven days – this is their bridal chamber for their honeymoon. He also builds another permanent house. The bride’s home is completely prepared by the groom.

Jesus built our personal “house” in one day. He built this universe as a “house for humanity” in six days. For thousands of years He has been building our eternal home – can you imagine?

The father of the groom decides when everything is ready. When all is in order he announces it is time to receive the bride. In Matthew 24:36 it says, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone”.

The Bride:

While the groom is busy preparing their eternal home, the bride is also busy preparing herself for the wedding ceremony, the honeymoon, the marriage feast and her future life as a bride. This is her only time to prepare. She must be prepared for she doesn't know when the great event will occur.

From the time of the acceptance of the proposal the bride wears a veil. By wearing it she is announcing to all several things:

- She is out of circulation.
- She is marked just for him and him alone.
- She gives up activities of her single life.
- She is preparing herself just for him.

The reason the preparation period was a minimum of one year was to observe the brides' fidelity and purity. A full nine month period must be passed without her giving birth.

Remember all she had at this point was:

- A. The Contract: promises of what he will do and what she must do to be prepared. She wants to be ready.
- B. And, the token gift she received.

It was a part of Jewish custom for a prospective bride to follow several "daily disciplines of preparation". They were:

- To keep a lamp in her window. She would make sure she had a supply of extra oil. She would insure that she never would run out of oil. This was very important. Every day she would trim the wick and add new oil. Matthew 25:1-13 records the "parable of the ten virgins" and it strongly teaches us to be ready.

- to prepare her bridal gown. She desired to be beautiful for her “Haton”. Isaiah 61:10 says “...our praises adorn us as jewels”.
- To take ritual baths in order to stay clean. Since she didn’t know when her “Haton” would return, she insured that she was always clean from the dirt of the world. I Peter 1:16 says that we are to, “Be holy as I am holy”.

Receiving the Bride:

When the bridegroom’s father determined it was time for the marriage, he would declare, “It is time!” The groom who has waited and waited now rushes out with all his friends to get her. The friends precede the arrival of the groom shouting “Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him”. This was all the warning she received before she was to be ready.

Bride of Christ, guard your heart; be ready at all times!

The groom would look for the light in the window. If the light was out it meant that her love had grown cold and she had turned her affection elsewhere. But, if the light was glowing in the night, then he knew that she was prepared and her love for him was aflame. She and the maids of the bride, who helped her to get prepared, are taken to the father’s house for the wedding ceremony. The maids of the Bride of Christ are the five-fold ministers in Ephesians 4:11-12: apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher and pastor.

Ceremony:

The Jewish ceremony was conducted in the home of the groom. Only a few were invited to come in and observe the wedding ceremony – usually the immediate family and two witnesses.

Bridal Chamber:

After the wedding ceremony, the groom takes his bride into the specially prepared bridal chamber for their time of intimacy. The groom would walk around the bride three times and then standing face to face, he would remove her veil and lay it on her shoulder. They would see each other “clearly, face to face”. She was unveiled only in his presence, revealing no spots, blemishes or wrinkles.

After the union was consummated, there was a 7 day celebration. Whereas only a few were invited to the Jewish wedding ceremony, many more were invited to the marriage feast. This is why they ran out of wine at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee.

At the end of the 7 days, the couple would emerge from the bridal chamber and sit down for the marriage supper. Revelation 19:7-9 says that our marriage supper is coming!

Questions to reflect on:

- Have we put on the veil?
- Have we taken ourselves out of circulation?
- Have we single perception, tunnel vision just for Jesus?
- Are we reading precious promises?
- Are we busy getting rid of our spots, wrinkles and blemishes?
 1. spots are pockets of rebellion,
 2. wrinkles are rigid, dried out ruts in our lives, and a rut is a grave with both ends missing,
 3. blemishes, to be without blame.
- Are we adorning ourselves with praise and worship? Praise is a jewel on our wedding dress. (Isaiah 61:10)
- Are we involved with God’s bridal party? The five fold ministers who are to prepare us for His coming!

- Are we constantly in a state of preparation?
- Are we trimming the wick? That is to keep the flesh cut back.
- Are we daily receiving fresh oil? Holy Spirit presence.
- Do we keep away from other loves? Avoiding the competition to lead us astray?
- Are we fully submitted to His love?

Scripture says that in the last days, because of iniquities in the heart “Love will grow cold”.

Wise brides are ready!!!