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## I Go To Prepare a Place



Part 17 (011021PM)

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This evening as we sit before the Lord's Table, we come as the betrothed bride of Christ, sought by the Holy Spirit and purchased at Calvary with Jesus' precious blood.

In [2 Corinthians 11:2](#), Paul wrote to the church, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ", Paul earlier had said, "For you were bought at a price" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).

What a powerful [1] picture of what God has prepared for us! The almighty Father looked down from heaven and accepted the price of our redemption. We, the bride, accepted the Groom and the evidence of His love for us.

When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven, He compared Himself to a bridegroom who was engaged to be married. "I love you as My bride," He said, in effect, "so I'll pay the bride price. I'll give up My life for you. I'll go to My Father's house where there are many rooms to prepare a place for you. One day I will return and take you to be with Me forever in heaven."

The metaphor Jesus used is one in which people who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior will be together in one family complex. Heaven will be like a joyous wedding reception, celebrating the love between the bride and the Bridegroom. This metaphor also gives new meaning to Jesus' important teaching about love, community, and support. Only by living in that way could the people of Jesus' day (and ours) be the vibrant, caring, influential community Jesus founded in His bride-the church.

In order to communicate His deep love for us, Jesus described His love in terms of a family community - terms that His audience clearly understood. He compared Himself to a bridegroom who chose a bride (the church); who paid a steep price for her (His life on the cross); who has gone to prepare a place for her in his father's house (heaven); and who will come again to take her home. This metaphor was familiar to the people of Jesus' day because a bridegroom customarily left his fiancée to build a home for her, then returned to get her. Likewise, Jesus will one day return to take His followers to His home in heaven, where ewe will experience joyous community with Him forever.

Our betrothal contract is the Word of God, for it contains every promise our loving, Groom has made on our behalf.

We exchanged gifts at our betrothal. When we accepted Him, Jesus gave us love, commitment, and loyalty. And at that moment God Himself has given us the Holy Spirit, who has bestowed His own gifts of eternal life, grace, faith, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Like the bride in her purifying mikvah, we have been baptized with water and by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit ([Luke 3:16](#); [Acts 1:5](#)). And in this interim, as we wait between Pentecost and Trumpets, Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom, returned to His Father's house to prepare everything for our arrival.

Before He departed this earth, Jesus said, "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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" [John 14:2-3](#).

How do we publicly demonstrate our acceptance of Christ? Just like the bride, each time we take the communion cup and drink we proclaim our wedding vows to our beloved Lord. We demonstrate that we love only Him, that we are loyal to Him, and that we are waiting for Him.

	STAND BEFORE CHRIST'S THRONE?
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Part: 1	Jesus: I AM the Light to Trust

In ancient [2] Israel, when it was time for a man and woman to marry, both fathers would negotiate the bride price to compensate the bride-to-be's family. After exchanging a **glass of wine to seal the agreement**, the couple was formally engaged. Then the young man would say to his fiancée, in effect, "I'm going home to my father's house and prepare a place for you. When I've done that, I'll return and take you to be my wife."

The son (typically in his mid-twenties) would then build a new house onto his father's existing one. As generations married and built their houses onto the original one, **they created a housing complex called an insula**. Here, family members ate, worked, and lived together. The children knew their grandparents, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Everyone benefited as family members shared their lives and values.

As her fiancé and his father prepared her new home, the bride-to-be (typically fourteen or fifteen years old) would remain at her parent's home, preparing her wedding clothes and learning the skills of homemaking. **During this time, she was known in the community as "one who had been bought with a price."** She might wait six months, nine months, or even longer for her beloved to return. No one knew the exact time when he would come for her.

Like the eager [3] bride, we keep our lamps burning and strive to be ready, for we don't know when He might come. Our bridegroom will soon come for us. Make no mistake, we must wait with our ears attuned to hear the trumpet sound. We're not going into or through the Tribulation. We're going home, to the city where there will be no death, no parting, no sorrow, no sickness. We're going to the city where the Lamb is the Light, to the city where roses never fade, to the city inhabited by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and King Jesus.

When the couple's house was completed, the husband-to-be would gather his friends and family and go to his fiancée's house to announce the wedding and take his bride to their new home. People would gather in the open courtyard of the insula, and the "best man" would stand by the door of the wedding chamber and wait while the couple consummated the marriage. Then he would announce that the wedding had taken place, and a joyous seven-day reception would follow. These insights help us to understand how wonderful heaven and our eternal relationship with God will be.

Jesus left us in His church with a reminder of His last night on earth. That last night witnessed the inauguration of the Last Supper, which we celebrate tonight as the Lord's Table or Communion. Tonight we need to examine one aspect of Christ's giving this supper. It is evident in the words He used and the sequence in which the Lord's Supper was given.

Jesus says right after the Lord's Last Supper these words:

*"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).*

To us who love the Bible, the words of [John 14:1-3](#) are familiar words of promise from Jesus to His Church. But tonight we need to also remember that Jesus actually drew from the culture of His day, and used words similar to those of a Jewish bridegroom to his bride.

In the Old Testament world the people of the Lord had wedding [4] customs, service, and ceremonies which were ([Romans 3:2](#); [9:4](#)) to teach us about the Messiah *Yeshua* ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)). With this in mind, let's examine the biblical wedding ceremony that the Lord gave to the Jewish people. The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony G-d gave to the Jewish people to teach us about the wedding of the Messiah consisted of 12 steps.

- 1. SELECTED:** The selection of the bride.
- 2. PURCHASED:** A bride price was established.
- 3. BETROTHED:** The bride and groom are betrothed to each other.
- 4. COMMUNICATED:** A written document is drawn up, known as a *kitubah*. This betrothal contract is called, in Hebrew, a *shitre erusin*.
- 5. CONSENTED:** The bride must give her consent.
- 6. SEALED:** Gifts were given to the bride and a cup called the cup of the covenant was shared between the bride and the groom.
- 7. CLEANSED:** The bride had a *mikvah* (water immersion), which is a ritual of cleansing.
- 8. SEPARATED:** The bridegroom departed
- 9. PREPARED:** The bridegroom went back to his father's house and prepared the bridal chamber, while the Bride prepared for her new home.
- 10. AWAITED:** The bridegroom would return with a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom comes" and the sound of the ram's horn (*shofar*) would be blown.
- 11. ESCORTED:** He would abduct his bride, usually in the middle of the night, to go to the bridal chamber where the marriage would be consummated. This if he full marriage, known in Hebrew as *nesu'in*.
- 12. CELEBRATED:** Finally, there would be a marriage supper for all the guests invited

by the father of the bride.

The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony G-d gave to the Jewish people to teach us about the wedding of the Messiah consisted of 12 steps.

1. **The selection of the bride.** [Ephesians 1:4](#) For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

2. **A bride price was established.** [1 Peter 1:18](#) For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,

3. **The bride and groom are betrothed to each other.** [Romans 8:28-30](#) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

4. **A written document is drawn up, known as a *kitubah*. This betrothal contract is called, in Hebrew, a *shitre erusin*.** [John 14:21](#) Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." [2 Corinthians 3:2-3](#) You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

5. **The bride must give her consent.** [Revelation 22:17](#) The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

6. **Gifts were given to the bride and a cup called the cup of the covenant was shared between the bride and the groom.** [1 Corinthians 11:25](#) In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

7. **The bride had a *mikvah* (water immersion), which is a ritual of cleansing.** [Titus 3:5](#) he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, [Acts 2:41](#) Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

8. **The bridegroom departed.** [John 16:7](#) But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

9. **The bridegroom went back to his father's house and prepared the bridal chamber. Meanwhile, the bride was to wait eagerly for the return of the bridegroom. In the mind of the bride, the bridegroom could come at any time, even in the middle of the night or at midnight. Therefore, she had to be ready at all times.** [Mark 13:32-37](#) "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" and [Matthew 25:1-3](#). [Matthew 25:1-3](#) "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. While waiting for her bridegroom to come, the bride had to have thought to herself, "Is he really coming back for me? Is he really going to keep his word?" [John 14:1-2](#) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

10. **The bridegroom would return with a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom comes" and the sound of the ram's horn (*shofar*) would be blown. The time of the return of the bridegroom was usually at midnight. When the bridegroom did come, he came with a shout ([Matthew 25:6](#)) and with the blowing of a shofar (trumpet) ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#); [Revelation 4:1](#)). The marriage between the bride and the groom will take place under the *chupah* or wedding canopy. Since Heaven is a type of *chupah*, we can see that when *Yeshua* gives a shout for His bride, accompanied by the blowing of a shofar (trumpet), the marriage between *Yeshua* and His bride will take place in Heaven. The marriage ceremony will have a sacred procession. For this reason, the bridegroom (*Yeshua*) will be led to the chupah first. When the bridegroom approaches the chupah, the cantor chants, "Blessed is he who comes." "Blessed is he who comes" is an idiomatic expression meaning "welcome." *Yeshua* said that he would not return for His bride until these words were said ([Matthew 23:39](#)). The groom is greeted like a king under the chupah. During this time *Yeshua*, the bridegroom, will be crowned King under the chupah, which is Heaven. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. He would abduct his bride, usually in the middle of the night, to go to the bridal chamber where the marriage would be consummated, known in Hebrew as *nesu'in*. [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.**

11. Finally, there would be a marriage supper for all the guests invited by the father of the bride. Revelation 19:9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

- What a powerful picture of what God has prepared for us! We are the betrothed bride of Christ, sought by the Holy Spirit and purchased at Calvary with Jesus' precious blood. Paul said, "For you were bought at a price" (1 Cor. 6:20)
- The almighty Father looked down from heaven and accepted the price of our redemption..
- We, the bride, accepted the Groom and the evidence of His love for us.
- Our betrothal contract is the Word of God, for it contains every promise our loving Groom has made on our behalf.
- We exchanged gifts at our betrothal. When we accepted Him, Jesus gave us love, commitment, and loyalty. God Himself has given us the Holy Spirit, who has bestowed His own gifts of eternal life, grace, faith, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- Like the bride in her purifying mikvah, we have been baptized with water and by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit.
- In this interim, as we wait between Pentecost and Trumpets, Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom, returned to His Father's house to prepare everything for our arrival.
- Before He departed this earth, Jesus said, "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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" John 14:2-3
- How do we publicly demonstrate our acceptance of Christ? Just like the bride, each time we take the communion cup and drink the wine we proclaim our wedding vows to our beloved Lord. We demonstrate that we love only Him, that we are loyal to Him, and that we are waiting for Him.
- Like the eager bride, we keep our lamps burning and strive to be ready, for we don't know when He might come. Our bridegroom will soon come for us. Make no mistake, we must wait with our ears attuned to hear the trumpet sound. We're not going into or through the Tribulation.
- We're going home, to the city where there will be no death, no parting, no sorrow, no sickness. We're going to the city where the Lamb is the Light, to the city where roses never fade, to the city inhabited by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and King Jesus.

These beautiful comparisons between the Jewish marriage and the coming of our Bridegroom teach us many things, but the most important is to be ready for our Bridegroom's coming. We are ready positionally when we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, but are we ready in our daily walk?

What does the coming of the Bridegroom mean to you?

Do you love Jesus Christ as much now as when you took Him to be your Savior?

Is He the One who gives meaning and purpose to your life?

Are you being faithful in your commitment to Him?

If not, rededicate your life to your wonderful Savior and Bridegroom so that you can be ready for the hour of His coming.

The ancient culture of Jewish weddings was beautiful

What Jesus had repeatedly [5] declared during His ministry earlier in the Gospels? He said He was the Groom and we are His Bride! Before we look at those passages, listen as I trace the customs of a Jewish marriage in the days of Jesus. Here is the ancient history of Jewish marriage customs. As we examine them we will see some very powerful prophetic implications applying to the Lord Jesus and His Church. As you listen you will find that He used the very same terms as the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews used, to portray His coming as Savior, and the Heavenly Bridegroom for His Bride-- the Church. Christ's offer as our Bridegroom is a glorious promise!

1. **She was sought by the groom.** In Bible days, when a young Jewish man chose his bride-to-be, he traveled from his father's house to her home to discuss betrothal-- the first major step in establishing the marriage covenant.

2. **She was paid for.** There he negotiated with her father the purchase price he would pay (called in the Hebrew tongue the **mohar**) to make her his own.

3. **She was set apart exclusively for the groom.** Once the bridegroom had agreed on the price, and paid that price, the marriage covenant was established; and the young man and woman were betrothed, or regarded as promised to one another— as husband and wife. From that moment the bride was declared "sanctified," or set apart exclusively for her bridegroom. Throughout this waiting time, the bride wore a veil as a symbol of her consecration to her groom alone. She was declaring her desire to not be seen or known by strangers.

4. **She was given a symbol of the covenant.** To testify of the binding nature of this promise, there was the offering of a symbol of this established covenant relationship. This symbol was the sharing of a cup of wine, as the groom and the bride drank from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction had been prayed.

5. **She was left with a promised return.** Then, before leaving His beloved bride, the groom would offer words of comfort. Often it was as long as a year before he would return to take her to the wedding. So he would say, "Don't be troubled, I am going to prepare the home for you to stay in with me, and then I will return." Listen again to this special promise he made before departing:

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*"Let not your heart be troubled . . .  
I go to prepare a place for you  
. . . and . . . I will come again."*

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**6. She was left to prepare.** Then, with the marriage covenant settled, the groom would leave his bride's home and return to his father's house, where he remained, separated from his bride for a period of days, weeks, and months. This was also a time for the bride to prepare. She was at work on her wedding dress, and she was busy gathering the necessary items for setting up her home. These were all part of getting ready to be the wife of her beloved groom when he returned.

**7. She was promised a new home.** During their time apart, the groom would be at work adding onto his father's home. The homes of Israel were built around central courtyards, and often had many smaller dwellings all forming the family home. So as the groom built a bridal chamber in his father's house, he was preparing for their coming marriage day.

**8. She was swept away unexpectedly.** Then when the groom was sure that all was ready, he set out with his best man and groomsmen. This was usually a nighttime torchlight procession (like Matthew 25 portrays then walking at night with torches) to the bride's home. There a cry was made that the Groom was coming, and the bride would come out to meet him. The groom then took his bride to be with him. Though the bride expected her bridegroom to come at any time, she did not know the exact day or hour when he would appear. His only warning of arrival was a shout--alerting the bride that it was time at last to come out to meet and greet her groom.

**9. She was taken to prepared place in the father's house.** Then the groom, with his bride and the entire wedding party, returned back to his father's house, where they found that the father had prepared a great marriage feast for all his wedding guests.

**10. She was united with her husband.** Soon after arrival, the bridegroom and bride were escorted by wedding party members to the bridal chamber (Hebrew: **huppah**). The bridegroom and bride went together into the bridal chamber to enter into their first physical union, consummating their covenanted marriage. The best man waited outside the chamber, listening for the groom's prearranged signal.

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During the seven-day wedding celebration, the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber.

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**11. She was kept for seven days in secret and then brought out.** When the marriage was consummated, the groom signaled the best man ([John 3:29](#)), who told the good news to the wedding guests; and all rejoiced and feasted in a seven-day marriage celebration. During that celebration, the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber. When the seven days were completed, the groom brought his bride out of the bridal chamber (with her veil removed) so that all could see her.

Did you note the amazing parallels between Christ's bride and a Jewish bride of the 1<sup>st</sup> century?

**1. We are bought with a price.** The Jewish groom paid a price to purchase his bride, and Jesus paid a price to purchase His Bride. The price He paid was His own life. He said, ". . . I lay down my life for the sheep" ([John 10:15](#)). Also read [Matthew 20:28](#) and [1 Peter 1:18-19](#).

**2. We are sanctified for Christ .** Once the marriage covenant was established, the Jewish bride was set apart exclusively for her groom. Likewise, the Church has been sanctified, or set apart exclusively, for Christ ([Eph. 5:25-27](#); [1 Cor. 1:2](#), [6:11](#); [Heb. 10:10](#), [13:12](#)).

**3. We partake of Christ's cup.** The cup of wine at the Jewish wedding was symbolic of the marriage covenant by which the Jewish groom obtained his bride. And the cup of communion that we drink is symbolic of the New Covenant through which Christ has obtained the Church ([1 Cor. 11:25](#)).

**4. Jesus went to heaven.** Just as the Jewish groom returned to his father's house after the marriage covenant had been established, so Jesus left the earth and returned to His Father's house in Heaven after He had established the New Covenant and rose from the dead ([John 6:62](#), [20:17](#)).

**5. We long for Christ's return.** Just as the Jewish groom and bride were separated for a time, Christ has been separated from the Church for over 1,900 years. The Church is now living in that period of separation. [Philippians 3:20](#) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [Hebrews 9:28](#) so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

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As the Jewish groom came to take his bride to live with him at the end of the period of separation, so Christ will come to take the Church to live with Him at the end of this Church Age ([John 14:3](#)).

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**6. Jesus is preparing a place for us.** Just as the Jewish groom spent time preparing living accommodations for his bride in his father's house, Jesus has been preparing living accommodations for us in His Father's house in Heaven ([John 14:2](#)).

**7. Jesus is coming again.** As the Jewish groom came to take his bride to live with him at the end of the period of separation, so Christ will come to take the Church to live

with Him at the end of this Church Age ([John 14:3](#)).

**8. We are always to be watching.** Just as the coming for the Jewish bride began by a torchlight procession of the groom and groomsmen from the groom's father's house to the home of the bride, so the taking of the Church will be accomplished by a procession of Christ and an angelic host from the Father's house in Heaven to the earth ([1 Thess. 4:16](#)).

**9. We are always to be ready.** Just as the Jewish bride did not know the exact time of the groom's coming, the Church does not know the exact time of Christ's coming. In the same way that the Jewish groom's arrival was preceded by a shout, so Christ's arrival to take the Church will be preceded by a shout ([1 Thess. 4:16](#)).

**10. We will join the saints at Christ's banquet table.** Just as the Jewish wedding party found wedding guests assembled in the groom's father's house when they arrived, so Messiah and the Church will find the souls of Old Testament saints assembled in Heaven when they arrive. These friends of the bridegroom will serve as the wedding guests. [Luke 13:29](#) They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

**11. We will be one with Christ.** Just as the Jewish groom and bride entered into physical union after they arrived at the groom's father's house (thereby consummating the marriage that had been covenanted earlier), Jesus and the Church will experience a great spiritual union after their arrival at the Father's house in Heaven. [John 17:20-22](#) "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

**12. We will stay with Jesus in heaven.** Just as the Jewish bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber for a period of seven days after arrival at the groom's father's house, the Church will remain hidden for a period of seven years (the Tribulation) after arrival at the Father's house in Heaven. While the seven-year Tribulation Period is taking place on earth, the Church will be in Heaven--totally hidden from the sight of those on the earth. [Revelation 4:1](#) After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

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While the seven-year Tribulation Period is taking place on earth, the Church will be in Heaven-- totally hidden from the sight of those on the earth.

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**13. We will return with our king.** Just as the Jewish groom brought his bride out of the bridal chamber at the conclusion of the seven days so that all could see who the bride was, so Christ will bring the Church out of Heaven at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period, so that all can see the identity of the true Church ([Col. 3:4](#)).

Believers are Christ's bride

So, who is the "Bride of Christ"? Obviously, we who are Church-age believers belonging to Christ are His Bride. In [Revelation 19:7](#) we see the Jewish wedding imagery. Remember that Hebrew weddings consisted of 3 phases:

- 1) **The Promise** or betrothal (the price, the cup, the wait);
- 2) **The Presentation** (the coming, the taking, the festivities, often lasting several days,
- 3) **The Proclamation** (the public exchanging of vows).

The Bride of Christ is that vast body of believers who in these last 2,000 years have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Consider another passage from Paul's pen, where he told the Corinthian believers: ". . . 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 Cor. 11:2](#)).

The church was betrothed to Christ by His sovereign choice in eternity past ([Eph. 1:4](#); [Heb. 13:20](#)) and will be presented to Him at the Rapture ([John 14:1-3](#); [1 Thess. 4:13-18](#)). The final supper will signify the end of the ceremony. This symbolic meal will take place at the establishment of the millennial kingdom and last throughout that 1,000 year period (cf. [21:2](#)). While the term "bride" often refers to the church, and does so here ([2 Cor. 11:2](#); [Eph. 5:22-24](#)), it ultimately expands to include all the redeemed of all ages, which becomes clear in [Revelation 21:2](#) as John's imagery here extends from the third part of the Jewish wedding, the ceremony. Believers (the bride) in the New Jerusalem come to meet Christ (the bridegroom) in the final ceremony of redemptive history. The whole city, occupied by all the saints, is called the bride, so that all saints must be finally included in the bride imagery and bridal blessing. God has brought home a bride for His beloved Son. All the saints live with Christ in the Father's house (a promise made before the church began [6]). Now, read [John 14:1-3](#) with me again, and remember what Jesus said in that powerful promise passage.

What do these Jewish marriage customs mean to you and me today? Why recall or study them at all? Because they give us an exciting "wedding portrait" of our blessed Savior and His Bride--the Church! No less than ten major statements in New Testament Scripture refer to Jesus Christ the Son of God as the "Bridegroom," and to the Church as His "Bride." It is the most magnificent and beautiful love story anywhere in the pages of prophecy. And we who belong to the Savior, who are the "Bride of Christ," eagerly and expectantly await the return of the Bridegroom.

- **Matthew 9:15** And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."
- **Matthew 22:1-4** And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"
- **Matthew 25:1-4** "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."
- **Mark 2:19-20** And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."
- **Luke 5:34-35** And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."
- **John 3:29** He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.
- **John 14:1-3** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."
- **Romans 7:4** Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.
- **2 Corinthians 11:1-2** Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.
- **Ephesians 5:23, 30-32** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
- **Revelation 19:7-9** Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
- 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."
- **Revelation 21:2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

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The Bride of Christ is that vast body of believers who in these last 2,000 years have received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord.

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Jesus chose us to be His Bride. Just as the Jewish bridegroom left his father's house to seek his bride, so Jesus left His Father's house in Heaven and came to earth 2,000 years ago to select His Bride.

Are you waiting for your groom's return perhaps Today?

Jesus' Relationship [7] with His Bride - the Church - Jesus often used the metaphor of the marriage relationship to describe His love for His church.

1. In first-century Israel, a bridegroom's family agreed to pay a bride price (usually a large sum) to compensate the bride's family for the loss of their daughter. What price did Jesus pay for you? (See **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**; **Galatians 3:13-14**; **1 Peter 1:18-19**.) Suggested Response: Jesus bought us at a great price. He died on the cross to redeem us with His precious blood.
2. An engagement in first-century Israel was as serious as marriage. (Breaking an engagement required a divorce.) After the families agreed on the "bride price," the couple drank a glass of wine together to indicate their life commitment to each other. How does your knowledge of this engagement custom enhance your understanding of **Luke 22:20**? Suggested Responses: Jesus was making a life commitment to His followers - a commitment that would require Him to lay down His life. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we are affirming our life commitment to Him.
3. After his betrothal, the husband-to-be returned to his father's household and, supervised by his father, prepared a place for his bride by adding on to the family insula. Where is Jesus, our Bridegroom, and what is He doing? (See **John 14:1-3**.) Suggested Responses: Jesus is in heaven, preparing a place for each of His followers in His Father's household of many rooms. He will return and take all believers home with Him, where we will live forever in a joyous community.
4. In first-century Israel, the bride-to-be remained at her parents' home, preparing for her wedding and learning how to be a wife and mother. One day, often in the evening, the husband-to-be and his friends and family would arrive at her home and announce their arrival with singing, dancing, shouting, and maybe even by blowing a trumpet. After the couple went to their new home and consummated their wedding, a lengthy celebration followed. How and when will Jesus, our spiritual Bridegroom, announce His arrival? (See **Matthew 24:36-39**; **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**.) When His Father says the time is right, Jesus will return from heaven with a "loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God," and take His followers to His home in heaven forever.
5. The parable of the ten virgins, recorded in **Matthew 25:1-13**, portrays the return of the bridegroom and the bride's need to be ready. In light of this parable, why must Christians always be ready for Jesus' return? Suggested Responses: We do not know when Jesus will return for us, so we must always be prepared and live expectantly, just as the brides-to-be in ancient Israel.
6. In light of the imminent return of Jesus, our spiritual Bridegroom, what should be our motive for godly living? (See **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**.) Suggested Responses: Jesus paid the "bride price" for us, so we belong to Him, not to ourselves. Because we are His, we ought to honor Him with our lives.
7. What does Jesus promise, according to **Revelation 19:7-9**; **21:2-4**? Suggested Response: Jesus (the Lamb) promises to return for us (His beautiful bride, the church) and begin a wedding celebration in honor of God's eternal dwelling with His people in

heaven.

Wedding in Jewish culture has some very powerful images for us as Christians today. A young man and his father negotiate the price for his bride, after that price is agreed upon a cup of wine is poured for the son. The son then holds out that cup for his bride and says "This cup I offer you". It is his way to say I love you and I offer you my life. For the girl it is a moment of decision, either to say no or to take and to drink.

So in the middle of the Passover meal Jesus turns to His disciples and holds out a cup just like in the marriage negotiations and says to them, "I love you, will you marry Me? Will you be my spiritual bride?" And that is what Jesus says to us today at this Lord's Supper. This is an incredibly personal moment, as God looks down at us and when we take this cup Christ has offered and drink it we say again to Christ "I love you, I accept your life and I give you my life in return."

Grooms paid a high price for their bride, but not many thought they would have to give their life for their bride. The elements of the Lord's Supper represent God's promised Lamb to die for our sins. And to celebrate that sacrifice God has invited us to have dinner with Him. I love you He says to me!

**What will Jesus [8] say when you stand before the Savior? I'd like to mention one final picture found in the Festival of Pentecost. Just as the giving of the Law was a rehearsal for the giving of the Spirit, the entire Pentecost experience is part of our "wedding rehearsal" for the marriage of the Lamb. When you accepted Christ and were baptized by His Spirit, you became betrothed to the Lamb. The image of a wedding is often used in Scripture. Typically, an ancient Hebrew wedding took place in two stages:**

The first stage was the betrothal, during which the bride and groom were legally joined, though they did not live together. The written betrothal contract was called a ketubah, and could not be broken without a legal divorce, a get. You may recall from the Christmas story that Mary and Joseph were betrothed when she became pregnant with Jesus. Alarmed at the thought that his bride-to-be was carrying another man's child, Joseph was tempted to quietly obtain a divorce until an angel spoke to him in a dream and told him that Mary carried the Son of God. The second stage of a Hebrew wedding is the consummation of the marriage. The groom prepares a place for his bride, then journeys to her father's house to get her. Amid great rejoicing, the groom returns with his bride, calls his friends, and arranges for a festive wedding supper. **Jeremiah 2:2-3** tells us that at Mount Sinai, God betrothed Himself to Israel: ***I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the LORD, The first fruits of His increase. (NKJV)*** The Torah, or teaching, which God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai was a betrothal contract. Just as marriage is a covenant, or an agreement between two people, even so the words that Moses wrote formed a marriage covenant between God and Israel: ***And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ...Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, " All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."*** ***And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words." (Ex. 24:4, 7-8 NKJV)*** But when Moses came down from the mountain, the newly betrothed nation of Israel had already forsaken her first love. Her leaders were dancing around the image of a golden calf; her love had already eroded to unfaithfulness. In a fit of righteous anger, Moses threw down the stone tablets upon which God Himself had written, breaking the record of a covenant with Israel (**Ex. 32:15-19**). God did renew the covenant with Israel (**Ex. 34:10-28**), but Moses, not God, wrote upon the second set of stones. The bride's fickle heart interrupted the "wedding rehearsal," but God's love is an enduring love. As we will see next week, the wedding plans are still valid. Christians are betrothed to Christ through the new covenant written on our hearts and sanctified by the blood of Christ. We love a heavenly Groom we have not seen, and believe He may come at any moment. Today the Master's Son, Jesus Christ, waits to come for His bride. When He comes to fetch her away, anyone who has trusted Him, Jew or Gentile, will go with Him to the place He has prepared. If you are a believer in Christ, a place at the wedding supper is reserved for you. But we can't become so heavenly focused that we forget one important fact: The purpose of Pentecost is evangelism. Pentecostal power was given so that you can be a witness for Christ in your Jerusalem, your Judea, and your Samaria.

- What a powerful picture of what God has prepared for us! We are the betrothed bride of Christ, sought by the Holy Spirit and purchased at Calvary with Jesus' precious blood. Paul said, "For you were bought at a price" (**1 Cor. 6:20 NKJV**).
- The almighty Father looked down from heaven and accepted the price of our redemption..
- We, the bride, accepted the Groom and the evidence of His love for us.
- Our betrothal contract is the Word of God, for it contains every promise our loving, Groom has made on our behalf.
- We exchanged gifts at our betrothal. When we accepted Him, Jesus gave us love, commitment, and loyalty. God Himself has given us the Holy Spirit, who has bestowed His own gifts of eternal life, grace, faith, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- Like the bride in her purifying mikvah, we have been baptized with water and by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (**Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5**).
- In this interim, as we wait between Pentecost and Trumpets, Jesus Christ, our Bridegroom, returned to His Father's house to prepare everything for our arrival.
- Before He departed this earth, Jesus said, "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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (**John 14:2-3 NKJV**).
- How do we publicly demonstrate our acceptance of Christ? Just like the bride, each time we take the communion cup and drink the wine we proclaim our wedding vows to our beloved Lord. We demonstrate that we love only Him, that we are loyal to Him, and that we are waiting for Him.
- Like the eager bride, we keep our lamps burning and strive to be ready, for we don't know when He might come. Our bridegroom will soon come for us. Make no mistake, we must wait with our ears attuned to hear the trumpet sound. We're not going into or through the Tribulation. We're going home, to the city where there will be no death, no parting, no sorrow, no sickness. We're going to the city where the Lamb is the Light, to the city where roses never fade, to the city inhabited by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and

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[1] Quotes from John Hagee, *His Glory Revealed*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, p. 114-117.

[2] Ray Vander Laan, *Faith Lessons On The Life & Ministry Of The Messiah. Leader's Guide*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, p. 138-139.

[3] Materials drawn from an article by Dr. Charles Halff at the website:  
<http://www.cjf.org/pages/wedding.htm>

[4] Edward Chumney, *The Seven Festivals of the Messiah*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1994, Pgs. 117-126.

[5] Christ speaks of this no less than ten times in: [Matthew 9:15](#), 22:1-14, 25:1-13; [Mark 2:19-20](#); [Luke 5:34-35](#); [John 3:29](#), 14:1-3. And others at least five times: [Romans 7:4](#); [II Corinthians 11:1-2](#); [Ephesians 5:22-32](#); [Revelation 19:1-9](#), 21:2.

[6] John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997

[7] Ray Vander Laan, *Faith Lessons On The Life & Ministry Of The Messiah. Leader's Guide*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, p. 152-158.

[8] John Hagee, *His Glory Revealed*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, p. 12-13.

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