



Chosen by God

The Jewish Roots of Christianity

Kiddushin

Jewish Wedding

One of the most beautifully vivid images that God has given us to better understand Him, and His relationship with us, is marriage. From its institution in Genesis, to the return of bridegroom Jesus for His bride, the church, in Revelation, we learn of God's character, and chosen role with us, through marriage.

What did Isaiah remind Israel of in Isaiah 54:5? _____

In Isaiah 62:4, what is the attitude of the Bridegroom to His bride? _____

What does Hosea 2:19 say about God's persistence? _____

Because it is both instituted by God, and a holy image of God, Jews view the sanctification of marriage as a high calling, much different than the emphasis on personal satisfaction as the goal of marriage in our own culture. To the Jewish people, marriage was a joyfully sacred obligation accompanied by a long celebration that involved the entire community. It is also a more contractual event, with the ketubah, or contract, as an actual part of the ceremony.

The traditional Jewish wedding, a drawn out process, has many elements that reflect Christian truths. How can a people who know little of Christ, or His relationship with His bride so perfectly picture it? Because that is exactly what God has designated this people to do, and they have been doing just that for thousands of years.

The choosing of the bride by the Father, the bride price paid, the sealing of the contract, the cup, the betrothal, the preparations made by both the bride and the groom, the unknown day or hour of the groom's arrival for his bride, the canopy, all of these bear an analogy to the return of Christ for His bride.

We are now in the age of the waiting bride, preparing for the expected, but unscheduled arrival of the One we have been betrothed to by covenant. We are to be keeping ourselves pure and unadulterated for the day that we have been sealed for through the security of the Holy Spirit. We are to keep an excited watch for His arrival.



Shiddukhin - Choosing the Bride

Remember those tense moments as a child when two captains were appointed to select teams for whatever game was about to happen? Or as a teenager the fear that you would be the only one of your peers left without a date to prom? Or even as an adult waiting to hear who will be chosen for the next promotion? Will I be one of the chosen?

The Jewish bride was traditionally chosen by the father of the groom, or his representative. Who carried out this matchmaking task for Abraham in Gen. 24:1-4? _____

Who was chosen as the worthy bride? _____

Who was chosen by God the Father according to Deut. 7:6? _____

Who has God chosen according to Eph. 1:4? _____

How does Romans 11:11-36 explain how both Israel and the New Covenant church can be the chosen bride? _____

In what way did Paul serve as a matchmaker according to his claim in 2 Cor. 11:1-2? _____

In what way do we serve as “matchmakers” for our Father? _____

Mohar - The Bride price

I love the story of Johnny Lingo and his eight cow bride. In this story, Johnny fell in love with the disheveled daughter of the town drunk as a child. He grew up and made his way in the world and then returned to offer her father an exorbitant bride price of eight cows. The town was shocked. Why would he pay so much for what could have been had for maybe a mere chicken? But Johnny was very wise, for the transformation in this young woman was well worth the price paid.

What was the bride price paid to Rebekah by Abraham’s servant in Gen. 24:53? _____

What was the bride price paid by Jacob for each of his wives in Gen. 29:20,27? _____

What bride price did David pay to Saul for Michal in 1 Sam. 18:25? _____

What price did Jesus pay for His bride the church? (1 Peter 1:18-19) _____

What affect has that had on your own transformation? _____

Ketubah - The Contract

Ketubah means “written” in Greek. It was, and still is the marriage contract, and a central part of the marriage, and wedding ceremony. It is somewhat comparable to a prenuptial agreement. In this contract the bride lets the groom know what assets she brings into the marriage, or her dowry. The groom promises to provide for his wife. It has its biblical basis in Exodus 21:9-11 which refers to a general “just rights for women.” It must be signed by two witnesses, neither related to the bride or groom.

How is this sort of contractual agreement described in Gen. 24:52-53? _____

Even in these ancient times, we see the bride having the choice to consent to, or reject the ketubah. How does Joshua present a similar choice to God’s people in Joshua 24:22? _____

What “dowry” do we commit to our bridegroom? _____

The Cup

God has always used a tangible sign to ratify His covenants. His sign of His covenant with Noah was a rainbow. The sign of His covenant with Abraham was passing between the halves of sacrificial animals. Contracts between people have their signs as well, the passing of a sandal, or, more familiar to us a handshake, or notarized signature. The marriage covenant was most often sealed in such a way with a cup of wine. The cup:

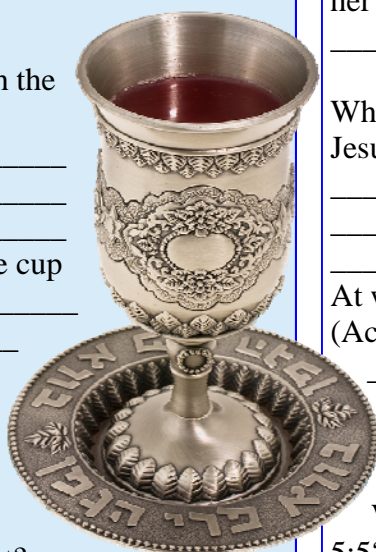
1. finalized what had been agreed upon in the negotiations for the bride
2. Was an expression of honor to the bride
3. Was a sign of acceptance by the bride as she took the cup

What does Jesus have to say about the cup He shared with the disciples in Luke 22:14-23?

When would Christ drink the cup again? _____

What do we call this covenantal sharing of the cup?

What does it mean for us in light of a marriage agreement? _____



Arrabon - The Pledge

After the contract was sealed, before the groom left to go prepare a place for his bride, he would leave for the bride a gift called, in Greek, an arrabon. Its purpose was to remind the bride of the groom's love for her during their separation, and a pledge that he would indeed come back for her. This is the idea behind our modern engagement ring which the happy bride proudly wears.



Arrabon is the word used by the Greek Septuagint to describe the pledge given by Judah to the disguised Tamar. What pledge did he leave with her according to Gen. 38:16-18? _____

What is the guarantee, or pledge that our groom Jesus has left with us according to Eph. 1:13-14? _____

At what Jewish festival was this pledge given? (Acts 2:1-4) _____

What is this accompanied by in 2 Cor. 1:21-22? _____

What word is used to describe this in 2 Cor. 5:5? _____

Mikveh - Immersion

Both the bride and groom would separately undergo a baptism in a specially constructed mikveh, or other body of water, to purify themselves in preparation for marriage.

What does Eph. 5: 25-27 say purifies Christ's bride? _____

Who was present when Jesus fulfilled this tradition? (Matt.3:13-17) _____

For whom was this act accompanied by the pledge, or guarantee in Acts 2:38? _____

What is an added significance in this act of betrothal to Christ? _____

Kiddushim - The Betrothal

This is the period of time after the marriage contract has been made, but before the wedding takes place. Kiddushim means “sanctified”. Just as the bride and groom are now set apart for each other, so is this time set apart for preparation for the wedding. During the betrothal, the couple is considered married, but live separately.

What would be required to break a betrothal according to Deut. 24:1-4? _____

Who was this option available to? _____

How do we see this in play for Joseph and Mary in Matt. 1:18-25? _____

What does God promise in Hosea 2:19-20? _____

Considering the words of Malachi 2:16, how likely is our heavenly groom to initiate a divorce during this period of betrothal with us? _____

What does Jesus promise in John 10:28? _____

The responsibility of the groom during this time of betrothal was to return to his father’s house and begin to prepare a room in which he and his bride would live. It was to be furnished with everything his new bride could possibly need. At some point the rabbis determined that this new home must be better than the one the bride had come from. But it wasn’t up to the groom to determine when everything was ready, that was the responsibility of the groom’s father.

What did Jesus tell the disciples he would be doing in John 14:1-3? _____

The bride was also to be making preparations during this time. Having no idea when the groom would come back for her, she could not afford to be idle and caught unprepared! She began to wear a veil to show that she was “taken,” and unavailable to other suitors, for of first importance was that she remain pure and unadulterated for her husband. She may have spent time undergoing beauty treatments as Esther did in Esther 2:12. What are some other preparations you imagine this bride in waiting carrying out? _____

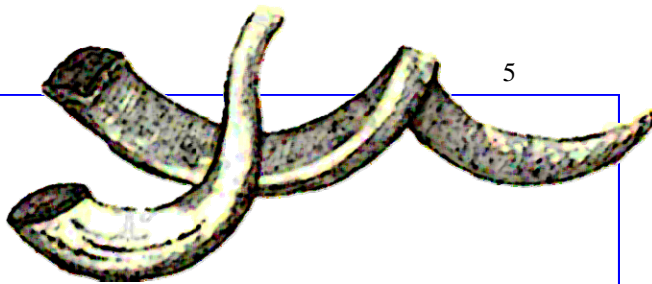
In what ways should we, Christ’s church be preparing for our bridegroom during this time of our betrothal? _____

What is one thing that 1 Cor. 6:18-20 suggests? _____

According to Ezekiel 16, how did the bride Israel fail in this? _____

What are some ways the church bride is prepared for the wedding by the pledge Christ left behind for us according to 1 Cor. 12-14? _____

How are we to help each other prepare Christ’s bride the church for His return? _____



The Arrival

Finally, sometime around a year after the betrothal, the evening comes. The father of the groom says that all is ready, and the excited groom dons the wedding crown (Is. 61:10, Rev. 11:15). He and his chosen friends, including his **shoshben**, or best man, noisily make their way to the bride's home. The people of the village would be roused from their sleep, and many would join the procession. As they approached the bride's home however, the raucous crowd was hushed. A shofar was blown, and one of the men, usually the shoshben, would give a shout of warning to the bride, and her maidens, that her groom had come for her. They knew this night was coming, and the bride and her friends have been waiting in preparation, but staying ready when the time is unknown is tricky. She had just enough time to jump into her wedding garments (probably given to her earlier by the groom), put on her veil, and light her lamp for the trip to her new home. Imagine the embarrassment if she was found unready, her dress was spotted or wrinkled, or her lamp had no oil! Her parents surrender her to the groom, and their daughter is no longer part of their family, but now belongs to her husband's tribe and family.

What did Jesus say in Matt. 24:32-36 that was typical of a Jewish groom? _____
 What happened to the unprepared virgins in Matt. 25:1-13? _____

How will the arrival of our Bridegroom Christ be announced according to 1 Thess. 4:16-18? _____

How many are in the wedding party of Rev. 19:6-8? _____

Under the Chuppah - The Canopy

According to Jewish custom, the wedding takes place outdoors at night, under a canopy called a chuppah, based, in part, on the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 15:5, to make his descendants as "stars in the heavens".

How is this reinforced by Deut. 1:10-11? _____

What reference is made to the chuppah in Joel 2:16? _____

Under the chuppah, the bride circles the groom seven times, corresponding to the Seven Blessings which are recited. The basis for the circling bride is found in Jer. 31:21-22 where the words "a woman courts a man" are literally translated "a woman surrounds a man" (Berlin 990)

There are no vows in a Jewish wedding, but the ketubah, or contract (kept in the bride's possession) is read. After the wedding this is usually hung in a prominent place in the home.

Then the entire wedding party accompanies the bride and groom to the bridal chamber, waiting outside until the consummation of the marriage can be celebrated by all, and the feasting begins!

The Feast

An important part of any Jewish wedding was the banquet feast given by the groom's father. No expense was to be spared, which could be considerable since the feasting would continue for seven days. The wine was to be kept flowing, food was spread, and at an extravagant wedding feast, the guests were even given special robes to wear. Rabbi's determined that it was even okay for the family to sell their scrolls in order to finance this event! The father began setting things in motion for the big day by sending out a preliminary invitation to the wedding guests. No specific time was set, only a heads up that the time was soon coming. A second invitation would be delivered at the point that the final preparations had been made.

In John 3:28-30, who had delivered the first invitation?

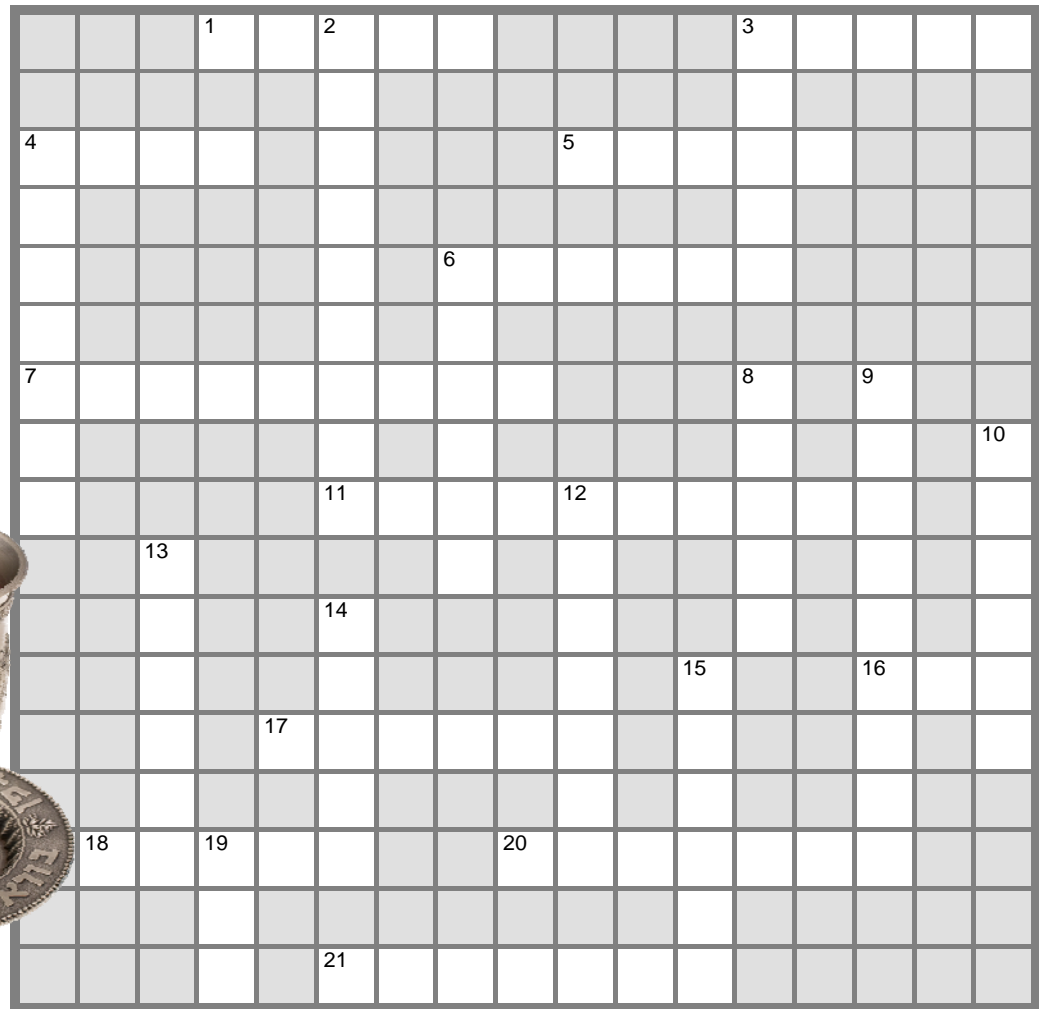
What does the angel say about those invited to the marriage supper in Rev. 19:9? _____

What happened during this final invitation to the father of the groom in Matt. 22:1-10? _____

What happened to the guest who was not wearing the appropriate attire in Matt. 22:11-14? _____

What is that garment according to Gal. 3:27? _____

PUZZLE Jewish Wedding Traditions



Across

- 1 assets of the bride (5)
- 3 chosen (5)
- 4 our symbol of a pledge (4)
- 5 Christ is this (5)
- 6 Jewish view of marriage (6)
- 7 means sanctified (9)
- 11 choosing of the bride (10)
- 16 ratified the contract when drank by both parties (3)
- 17 chooses the bride (6)
- 18 announces the coming of the groom (5)
- 20 matchmaker for Abraham (7)
- 21 the marriage contract (7)

Down

- 2 marriage contract is signed by two of these (9)
- 3 bride price paid by Christ (5)
- 4 chosen as bride for Isaac (7)
- 6 our pledge of Christ's return (6)
- 8 the bride price (5)
- 9 festival when the pledge was delivered to the church (9)
- 10 the wedding takes place under this (6)
- 12 required to break a betrothal (7)
- 13 the bride (6)
- 14 banquet given by the groom's father (5)
- 15 means immersion (6)
- 19 some of the virgins ran out of this (3)



Puzzle Answers:

