

The Jewish Marriage Metaphorically as the Church

“The Kingdom is like a Wedding...” Mt. 22:2

- Jesus created an intimate portrayal of Himself through Marriage
- Pursuing Jesus as a bridegroom is all about Love: See Hosea, Esther, and Song of Solomon
- The bridal paradigm views the kingdom of God as a romance between Jesus the bridegroom and us as his cherished bride.
- A Masters marriage to a slave freed all the children! The Master became the Groom and the slave became His bride. (Jesus freed us as slaves so we can teach our children to be free! **Mal.4:6 “He shall turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children...”**
- Hosea said, ***“In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me your husband, you will no longer call me my master.” Hos. 2:16***

Old Testament

Esther is a picture of how the bride will be prepared to receive her Husband /King. The King overthrows the evil one (Haman) with help from his bride.

Ruth (bride) is a picture of how the bride of Christ becomes part of God’s people through the motivational love of her Kinsman-Redeemer Boaz (Christ)

The **Song of Solomon** portrays the bride with her Bridegroom in an intimate relationship

Hosea portrays the unfaithful adulterous bride (as Israel) and how God wins her back through Hosea forever being her husband.

New Testament

When Jesus was **first** presented to the Nation of Israel, John presented Jesus as the Bridegroom (Jn 3:29)

Jesus **first** revealed how his servants should minister when He referred to them as “friends of the Bridegroom.” (Mt. 9:15)

Jesus **first** message to the seven churches of Asia Minor was a call to return to your first love as Him being the bridegroom. (Rev. 2:1-7)

Jesus **first** miracle was at a wedding in Cana, a prophetic miracle where Jesus saves the best wine for the wedding feast last.

STEPS OF MARRIAGE

1. The arrangement of the Marriage
2. The Betrothal Ceremony
3. The preparation between the Betrothal and the Wedding
4. The Wedding Ceremony
5. The Wedding Feast

1) The Arrangement (*shiddukhin & ketubah*)

The marriage proposal is called the *shiddukhin*. To marry without first proposing was considered an immoral act. Therefore, Jesus bids or proposes all to come to the marriage ceremony and be His bride church.

The word *kiddushin* for wedding comes from the word *qodesh* meaning “holy.” Therefore, a wedding is a “holy” ceremony. Everything is related to a religious sacred occasion. The wedding process is a spiritual commitment to both parties.

Biblical marriage is an arrangement that is covenantal not contractual. Unfortunately, marriage in our world has eroded into a contract not a covenant. A Covenant is based on a **relational** agreement and a contract is based on a **legal** agreement. A contract deals with the legality of the people (legal paper) whereas a covenant deals with the trust of the people involved themselves (handshake). One deals with a binding legal arrangement whereas the other is a trusting/faith covenant in each other’s character. That is why as the Bridegroom; Jesus’ character is on trial. Jesus, in the judgment, must prove that he tried to wed the church (bride) as a body of believers, leaving out no one who truly and freely desired to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus desired to show that He can be trusted. God looks at the wedding vows to each other as a covenant relationship to each other rather than a civil legal binding contract. Therefore, the millennium will prove that the Groom did all He could to woo and entreat His bride to the Wedding Ceremony or Marriage supper of the Lamb.

The “*ketubah*” literally means “that which is written.” In addition, it was signed and executed prior to the wedding ceremony as represented in Heb. 9:16, 17.

During the *ketubah* ceremony the conditions of the arrangement were made, the responsibilities and obligations of both parties, the dowry of the bride (which was the giving of herself as a sweet smelling aroma, 2 Cor. 2:15; Phil. 4:18, based on Esther & Luke 7 the story of Mary) and the bride price, to be paid by the Bridegroom (Jesus’ death).

Symbolism

Much scripture in the Old Testament pointed metaphorically forward to the marriage arrangement, i.e. feasts, sanctuary, O.T. quotes such as Isa. 53. However, God’s original intentions were to marry his people at Mt. Sinai but His bride refused. Therefore, Jesus first coming was the arrangement of marriage to the church in the Jewish wedding system.

If you’re a born again believer you are the recipient of an arranged marriage with Christ. He predestined all to be a part of his arranged marriage, (Rom. 8:29 = **predestined all** and Rom.12:3 **all were given a measure of faith**) and “Christ (Husband) loved the church and gave His life for it.” Eph.5:25, in order that **“Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love...” Eph. 3:17**

- He sent Jesus to explain the terms and conditions of the arrangement, offering a heavenly *ketubah* (new covenant/contract) to describe what marriage to Him would include. The bride would consider or **“count the cost” Luke 14:28** of the arrangement or invitation. Mt. 1:23; Mt. 10:38,

Luke 5:36 = “...*Can He make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?*” Mt.10:38 = “*And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*” “*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*” Gal.6:7 “*But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.*” Mt. 19:30

- Jesus the Bridegroom gave His life on the cross as the *Mohar* (dowry) to purchase His bride. Through the purchase it changed the status of the bride from one of single to married (Ex. 15:36; 12:36; Heb. 9:16-19 = “**How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.**”
- As was always the custom, there were two witnesses for the Bridegroom offering His *mohar*. This is represented as Moses and Elijah. Moses represented the witness for the bride (since Moses gave assistance to the bride) and Elijah for the Bridegroom, since Elijah gave witness for God of the evil in his day on Mt. Carmel. Also, in order to make the *ketubah* (covenant) legal there must be 2 or more witnesses. When the witnesses sign the *ketubah* (covenantal contract) then the document becomes valid. This was performed by Moses and Elijah coming down on Mt. Tabor (Mt.17:2, 3) as the two witnesses to the *ketubah* and Jesus in the middle as the Groom. It is parallel to Jesus being on Mt. Sinai confirming the *ketubah* with the children of Israel 1,500 years before. Therefore, it is a reconfirmation of the bridegroom’s commitment to go through the *mohar* (bride price) and pay the ultimate price for His bride in order that the bride receive the inheritance (the new life of Christ) of the *ketubah*.
- John the Baptist was a witness, or best man, to Jesus since he is called a messenger of Elijah, as there will be a third Elijah in the last days. (Mt.17:12; Mal.4:5) Jn.3:29 “**He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: thus my joy therefore is made full.**”
- In addition to the *mohar* there was an *attestation* on the part of the Groom to the bride. An *attestation* was a formal acceptance or obligation to wed. It also met that one party will redeem the other, such as Boaz and Ruth. It also meant that the redeemed party received inheritance into the family as one was symbolically grafted in. This was demonstrated by the groom taking off his shoe to give to the other party as in Ruth 4:7. It was also used when a relative of the woman’s husband had an obligation to marry the bride when she became widowed.
- The heavenly Father sent the Matchmaker *Shadchanim* , the Holy Spirit, to invite us to become the bride of Christ by saying “yes” to His invitation. The groom (Christ) pledged to His bride (church) all of His vows and would be faithful to honor them, “**for all the promises in Him are yes...**” 2 Cor. 1:20. The invitation was a down payment as a gift to the bride to receive the groom. Ephesians says, “**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, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.**”
- A *minyany* was a representation of at least 10 people who “knew the Law” and acted as other witnesses to the marriage. This would be considered a quorum or legal minimum to also validate the *ketubah* (covenant/contract). These are represented in Mt. 25 as the ten virgins.

- Similar to a Life insurance policy if the husband dies (Jesus) the wife (church) collects the inheritance, in this case it was eternal life.

2) The Betrothal Ceremony (erusin)

- Jesus is depicted that all who belong to Him (the church) are betrothed (married) to Him. Eph. 5:25
- Hosea says, “**I will betroth thee forever.**” (Hos. 2:19,20) and the woman’s property became the betrothed and vice versa.
- The Hebrew word for betrothed is both “*mnesteuo*” and “*kiddushin*” (sanctified) comes from the root word “*mnaomai*” = meaning “to remember.” Therefore, the bride was to remember that she was betrothed to her groom and realize that the wedding day would come soon and she needed to prepare (sanctify) herself for the wedding ceremony as stated in the book of Esther, “**after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)**” Es. 2:12
- In ancient Jewish weddings the betrothal marked a ceremony followed by a feast which officially inaugurated the couple into the new betrothal covenant. This would be related to the last supper where Christ offered the *Mohar* (dowry= His death) for the bride price and would go back to His Father’s house to prepare a room for His bride (Jn. 14:2,3) “**In my Father’s house are many mansions (dwelling rooms); 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.**”
- Before the covenant betrothal ceremony began, the bride and bridegroom were to partake in a ritual immersion in water, symbolized by a spiritual cleansing. This was called the “*mikvah*” (cleansing) and represented baptism. It was a baptism represented by Christ (the trinity being present) “**And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**” Matt.3:15,16. In addition, the bride (church) was baptized, “**For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**” Gal. 3:27 Also, in 2 Cor 11:2 and Jn 3:29 it describes how John the Baptist was the bridegroom’s best man when he introduced the bridegroom to the nation Israel and then baptized the groom and the bride.
- His preparation is related to His priesthood. But His delay is only linked to the brides delay for not getting prepared or not cooperating with the High Priest for the preparation. As Jesus said “**many (all) are called but few are the choosing ones**” (Mt. 22:14) Therefore, the invitation is to choose to be pure and chaste virgin for the groom. The word “chosen” in Greek is *Eklektos* similar to *Ekleisia* (called out) for church. Therefore, those choosing ones make up the church (the called out ones).
- Paul describes in Phil. 1:29 that “**it is given to suffer for His sake.**” The word “given” in Greek means “freely given.” This is the gift the bride gives to the Bridegroom, suffering for His sake. See also Phil. 3:10 (fellowship = a gift jointly contributed)

- The betrothal period usually lasted one year before the wedding ceremony took place, as in the book of Esther. In Mt. 1:18 Joseph desired to divorce Mary even though they were not officially married yet, but legally betrothed, or legally married. Therefore, an angel told Joseph not to divorce Mary because the child she was having was from God. Imagine the social stigma attached to both when they went to Bethlehem to register and met the families of Joseph there when Mary was 7-9 months pregnant (Luke 2:5,6).
- The bride would give the groom a *Tallith*, which is based on Num. 15:38,39 and was a prayer cloth with 4 tassels on each corner of it called the “*Tzitzith*”. This is part of the dowry of the bride to the groom. Each of the 4 tassels was blue, representing the Law, and based on certain rabbinic traditions each of the 4 tassels had 8 strings which made a total of 32 strings. The *tassels* represented the Law and were to remind the groom of his faithfulness to his bride, ***“They shall be tassels for you and you shall look at them, and not be tempted after your hearts and after your eyes.” (Num. 15:39).*** The number 32 in Hebrew is the word “Lev.” These people were recognized as the 32’s or Lev-(ites). The word “Levites” means “heart worshippers.” The Levites were the only faithful tribe during the rebellion of Aaron and the Golden calf. That is why God chose the true “heart worshippers” to be priests in His temple. Rom. 6:17 says, ***“But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.”*** It is also represented in the bride giving her whole heart to the groom as the groom to the bride. Therefore, these were represented as the priests of the house and priests for God. Symbolically the groom (man) is represented as the leader or spiritual priest over the house.
- The bride would and could bring anything of value as a dowry to the groom. The story in Mark 14:3-9 of the prostitute is a beautiful depiction of the spiritual bride meeting the Groom.

Here is a brief description of the dowry to Christ, ***“In first century Judaism, when a young woman reached the age of availability for marriage, her family would purchase an alabaster flask (box) for her and fill it with precious ointment. The size of the flask(box) and the value of the ointment would parallel her family's wealth. This alabaster flask (box) would be part of her dowry. When a young man came to ask for her in marriage, she would respond by taking the alabaster flask (box) and breaking it at his feet. This gesture of anointing his feet showed the groom honor.”*** Lady in Waiting, Jackie Kendall

Symbolism

- The English word Betroth is the word ***erusin*** in Hebrew and means “to bind”. Therefore, this was the binding ceremony of three people, God, bride and groom, as is stated in Eccl. 4:12, ***“...a threefold cord is not quickly broken”***
- Before the betrothal ceremony began the groom shows that his pockets are empty to remind the bride that she is not marrying him for his money and accepts him for who he is, and not for his possessions. For the same reason it is custom that the bride not wear any jewelry. Jesus had ***“no where to lay his head” (Mt. 8:20) and of the bride, “adorning let it not be that outward adorning wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of***

God of great price.” (1 Pet. 3:3,4) Also, on Feast of Trumpets and Day of Atonement, no one was to wear jewelry.

- As a betrothed bride, we have also partaken of the ritual bath (baptism) **mikvah**, spiritual purification/cleansing/rebirth. Our baptism symbolizes our spiritual purification, our separation unto our Husband, and our vow to be prepared for our future wedding. Therefore, baptism is a symbol of spiritual consecration and cleansing for a future wedding ceremony.
- Baptism is also the initiating ceremony of entering into the New Covenant, which is the marriage Covenant. It defines the New Covenant as God writes His law on our hearts, and as we had seen we become priests or “Levites” (heart worshippers) unto God. We see this also in Eph. 5:25-27, Paul compares Christ to marriage, he says, **“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.”**
- For all who say “yes” to the Holy Spirit’s invitation to become the bride of Christ, (See Acts 2:38,39) a betrothal ceremony takes place. Paul baptized (**mikvah**) and presented the Corinthians to the Groom, he says, **“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.”** (2 Cor. 11:2)
- When we entered the New Covenant with Jesus, we exchanged vows with Him as our Husband and we sealed the agreement with a cup of wine (last supper/communion). In fact, each time we partake of the bread and wine (communion) we look back with joy to our betrothal ceremony and at the same time, look forward to our upcoming wedding ceremony. That is why Jesus has not drunk any wine as of yet until He drinks new wine at the wedding ceremony/feast (Mt.26:29).
- Wine in Jewish weddings symbolized the covenant to become married, and it also symbolized the groom’s responsibility to help prepare the bride for the wedding ceremony. Therefore, Jesus drank the wine as a symbol of his new covenant to become married to the (church) the bride and sealed it with His own blood, **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”** (Mt. 26:28). His shed blood made it possible for Him to go into the Father’s house and prepare a place (the most holy Place) for His bride to enter and forever be with His bride. Also, the symbol of Jesus washing his bride’s feet proves that Jesus is the one that cleanses us and that he took upon Himself our dirt and filth. But only he who **allows** Christ to cleanse him will be clean. The Bridegroom says in Rev. 22:11, says, **“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”** Let us allow the Groom (Christ) to **“cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 Jn. 1:9**
- After the **ketubah**, was signed at the betrothal ceremony, the bride and groom recited the **Yom Kippur** confession. This was a confession time of past sins in each other’s life. Wherefore, Jesus being the Groom, had no sins to confess, but pledged Himself to the church at the last supper and the disciples (bride) responded. However, this could also be prophetic of the bride (church) drinking the cup during Jacob’s time of trouble.
- After this confession time the bride and groom were free from sin (thus the Yom Kippur parallel) and they were to keep themselves spotless, especially during the preparation time before the Wedding ceremony takes place. **Eccl. 9:8** says, **“at all times let your garment be white”**

3) **The Preparation Time (Tamruwq) (Spiritual purification)**

- After the betrothal ceremony the bride stayed at her father's house until the Bridegroom prepared his house for her, then he would receive her when she was fully prepared. The bridegroom went to His father's house and prepared His house to receive his bride. He would add a room onto His Father's house. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place (**topos = room**) for you, and where I am you will also be." (Jn. 14:2,3)
- During this time the bride and groom were faithful to each other if adultery occurred then that person was (spiritually) cut-off, both the man and the woman involved (see Num. 5).
- At the same time the bride would be in cooperation with the Groom/Priest preparing herself for the wedding ceremony. This involved three things:
 - A) First the bride was observed, usually by the local people (witnesses to her purity) for at least one year so she did not become pregnant and assure that she was a virgin. (This was Joseph's fear in Luke 2:4 during the census). It was also symbolized by the church/bride not being involved in an adulterous affair based on Num. 5.
 - B) The bride also consecrated herself by self examination similar to what Paul said in 2 Cor. 13:5, **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"**. She examined everything in her life (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5) and changed whatever was necessary in order to be ready for the holy covenant of marriage.
In fact Jewish leaders began to use the term **"maqedesh"** (consecrated) for the act of betrothal. During the ceremony the groom would say, you are **"mekudeshet"** (consecrated) unto me. Therefore, the bride made sure that she was totally set apart from all other relationships and activities and that she was completely separated for her groom. In Luke 23:14 Pilate examined the Bridegroom and "found no fault in Him."
 - C) Third, the bride made her own wedding garments. Ancient Jewish women did not have the luxury of going to a store and purchasing a premade dress. They spent many hours making them beautiful for their groom. The Midrash speaks of 24 adornments with which the bride was beautified. The number 24 corresponds to the 24 characteristics (see Summary at end of paper) that make a daily priest acceptable to God. In addition, there were 24 daily priests. Therefore God has done everything to make His bride beautiful and complete. (Mt. 22:11,12; Rev. 19:7-9;)

Symbolism

- During this preparation time Jesus has gone back to His Father's house to prepare a "room" for us that where He is (the Bridegroom is), we (the bride) may be also. Therefore, we are called to 1) wait expectantly for His return, 2) continue to consecrate ourselves, and 3) prepare our wedding garments for the big day. (Jn. 14:3; Eph. 5:25-27; Mt. 22:11,12; Mt.25:10; Rev. 19:7-9)
- In addition, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as the second half of His betrothal bride price, (the first half was His death) in order that Christ may be reproduced in the Bride via the Holy Place ministry. Jesus has gone back to His Father's house (heaven) and was inaugurated as the high priest of the temple in order to "go and prepare a place (**topos = room**) for you." The room that Jesus earned

the right to “prepare” (**hetoimazo = make ready to be occupied**) is the most holy place. This was a very intimate place where God Himself dwells. The groom wanted His bride to be with Him in the most holy place and share His throne with her as Rev. 3:21 states, **“To him that overcomes 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.”**

- Jesus earned the right to the most holy place because He received the key of David. Isa. 22:22 states that this key, as was given to Hezekiah’s son Eliakim, unlocks all rooms of the temple and gives all power to whom receives it. Jesus’ baptism (**mikvah**) and His death (**mohar = bride price**) happened symbolically during the betrothal ceremony and it gave Him the right to receive the key and unlock the intimate most holy place so that we can enter into relationship with him where the two become one (The chuppah during the wedding ceremony). The key opens rooms that cannot be shut and shut rooms that cannot be opened, as Rev. 3:7 states, **“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that opened, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man opened”**
- The bride can now trust her groom that He is doing what He promised (“preparing a place”). The Groom made His Covenant vows and established them proving that His character is just, loving, and selfless for His bride.
- The bride can act now by faith, since her Groom went into the Most Holy Place (“prepared a room in the Father’s house”) and that now she can be “prepared” to enter that room with her Groom. The question is, has she cooperated and performed all of the purifications and cleansings during this time (12 months) that are necessary to be received by her Groom/King? (Similar as with Esther?)
- The “delay” (**chronizo = time delay**) of the Bridegroom, based on Mt.25:5, is only because the bride has not “made herself ready” for the King as in Esther’s day. The word’s “made” and “ready” in Rev. 19:7 are the same Greek words for “prepare” that Jesus used in Jn.14 that he was preparing a place for us. (**hetoimazo = make ready to be occupied**). Therefore, the Bride, in Rev. 19:7 has finally been “prepared” (**hetoimazo**) or **occupied**. Thus the bride has allowed herself to be occupied by her Groom in order that she can be with Him in the Most Holy place and share His throne in that room. Thus, **“Christ in you the hope of glory (doxa= character and wedding = Halal)” Col. 1:27**. Therefore, the double meaning of the bride being occupied is 1) that Christ is within her, His law or character is fully formed in her and 2) that she now spiritually can occupy the most holy place for a physical wedding in heaven. Thus, **“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with (in) men, and he will dwell with (in) them...” Rev. 21:3**.

4) The Wedding Ceremony (Halal = to shine, praise, glory)

- Toward the end of the year long betrothal period , when the bride was getting herself ready and the groom when back to his father’s house to prepare a room for his bride, the bride waited with great expectancy for the groom to come and the ceremony to take place. Late in the evening, the bride and her wedding party would keep their oil lamps burning just in case it was time for the wedding to take place. Because it was late at night the wedding party would be called at a minutes’ notice if the bridegroom comes. Some of the oil lamps had certain oil lamp holders in shoes or

sandals. Therefore God's word can be that light, ***"thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."*** (*Ps.119:105*)

- For the ceremony to take place each other was assuming the other was ready. However, in the spiritual sense, the groom (Jesus) delayed His coming only because he knew the bride was not ready. (Rev. 19:7-9)
- Both bride and groom dressed in white representing purity.
- In the traditional rabbinic wedding, the wedding ceremony was a surprise to both the groom and the bride. When the bridegroom was asked the date of the wedding ceremony he would say, ***"No one knows the date or the hour except my Father."*** (Mt. 25:13) Therefore, only the Father of the groom would allow the groom to go to the bride's house and get His wife.
- When the time was right the father of the Groom would issue the approval for the wedding ceremony to begin, this is the ***"fullness of time"*** spoken of by Paul in *Eph. 1:10*. The Groom (Jesus) and His wedding party (the angels and all of heaven) would leave the Groom's house (heaven) to go get His bride (the chaste church, the 144,000 on earth).
- The friend's of the bride (church) would shout ***"Behold the bridegroom cometh,"*** as in *Mt.25:6* ***"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him"*** and then they would blow the last shofar blast (***the last trump, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,..."*** *1 Cor. 15:52*) The groomsmen would lead the wedding party through the streets (through heaven) and bring the bride back to the groom's home where the wedding canopy or ***"chuppah"*** waited. Thus also ushering in ***"sukkot"*** the Feast of Tabernacles.
- The wedding ceremony or ***"halal"***(also known as *nissuin*) was performed under the ***"chuppah."*** This is represented as the feast of tabernacles or *sukkot*. The substance of the ***"halal,"*** the actual marriage ceremony, are seven blessings that reflect the theme of the Creator (Creator of Shabbat, since Sukkot is as a ***"rest"***) and united with His bride through joy and celebration. Here are the seven blessings, the *Sheva Berrakhoth* :

1. Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, **Creator of the fruit of the vine.**

2. Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, **Who created all things for Your glory.**

3. Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, **Creator of man.**

4. Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, **Who created man and woman in Your image, fashioning woman from man as his mate, that together they might perpetuate life.** Praised are You, O Lord, Creator of man.

5. May Zion **rejoice as her children are restored to her in joy.** Praised are You, O Lord, Who causes Zion to rejoice at her children's return.

6. **Grant perfect joy to these loving companions,** as You did to the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. **Praised are You, O Lord, who grants the joy of bride and groom.**

7. Praised are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who created joy and gladness, bride and groom, mirth, song, delight and rejoicing, love and harmony, peace and companionship. **O Lord our God, may there ever be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem voices of joy and gladness, voices of bride and groom, the jubilant voices of those joined in marriage under the bridal canopy, the voices of young people feasting and singing.** Praised are You, O Lord, Who causes the groom to rejoice with his bride.

- During the recitation of these blessings, as was the case in the first ceremony, and upon the completion of the blessings, the groom and bride drink from the wine cup. Thus, the vows made during the betrothal ceremony were completed in the marriage ceremony. The marriage ceremony was once again sealed with a cup of wine. During the last supper (betrothal ceremony, Jesus said, ***“But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day (wedding day) when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Mt. 26:29)*** Now the day arrived.
- The most striking characteristic of the blessings is that, with the exception of the last one, they focus not on love, but on the theme of creation. In addition to referring to God as "Creator of the fruit of the vine" in the omnipresent blessing over wine, the liturgy refers to God as creator of all things, creator of man, creator of man and woman, and creator of the peace of the Garden of Eden. The theme of creation plays several significant roles in the ceremony. First, it relates to the Jewish conception of marriage as a natural state and suggests that, by marrying, the couple now enters this appropriate condition.
- Second, it suggests that the marriage furthers God's process of creation, procreation, thus furthering the kingdom as yet unfulfilled. It also relates to Jesus’ bride (the priesthood) representing Jesus throughout the universe as ambassadors and delivering a unique message to the unfallen worlds about a deeper love, God’s love, experienced by the bride (144,000) , thus solidifying the universe so that ***“adversity (sin) will not rise a second time.” (Nah.1:9)***
- Just as the Israelites fasted on their wedding day at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19) before receiving the Torah, so the bride and groom would emulate this and a fast was on their wedding day.
- The bride was veiled as she waited for her groom. Why a veil? Only the Groom had an intimate connection to the bride on that day and appreciated her beauty like no other could. Before her marriage everyone saw her face but when the message went out, “the bridegroom cometh...” then she veiled herself in preparation only for her Husband to see her beauty, because at this time it was only He that appreciated her beauty.” ***“So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord....” (Ps. 45:11)*** . However, she has prepared herself to be beautiful in the eyes of her husband/King because she has finally appreciated His beauty and faithfulness, ***“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.” (Ps. 27:4)*** and ***“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” (Ps. 29:2)***

Symbolism

- The preparation period comes to an end and the Father says “Go get your bride,” and the friends of the Bridegroom say to the bride and *minion* (wedding party) ***“Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go out to meet Him.” The shofar, the last trump, will sound and the bride will meet the Bridegroom in the air (1 Thess. 4:16,17).*** Furthermore, in ancient Jewish weddings it almost always was expected that the Bridegroom come at night, usually the second hour of the night which was midnight.
- Again as stated in the *Ketubah* or wedding covenant, and the betrothal ceremony so also the wedding ceremony had two witnesses present to legally bind the ceremony.
- The wedding ceremony will be held under the *chuppah* and the marriage ceremony commences. Isa. 4:5,6 says, ***“Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people***

upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people... Just as at Mt. Sinai God spread His canopy over His bride at Mt. Sinai as Ezekiel states, ***“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 Jehovah, and thou becamest mine.” (Eze. 16:8)***

- The *chuppah* or canopy was made open on all four sides reflecting the idea that **God invites and offers His salvation to all** to come to the betrothal and marriage ceremony. Though there is one bride, the body of believers make up that bride. God is not polygamist he only has one bride and that bride is the body of Christ incarnated into His bride through the inheritance the bride received when Christ died, the *mohar* (dowry) gift to His bride.
- A similar comparison to the High Priest is made. In Rabbi Kaplan’s book, *Made in Heaven*, he states on page 151, “It is also taught that on His wedding day the bridegroom is like a high priest going into the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is like the wedding chamber (*chuppah*), and the High Priest has drawn himself into a deep relationship with God. As the High priest has no pockets, so the bridegroom as nothing in his pockets. As the High Priest, on Yom Kippur, went in with plain white vestments (Lev. 16:4) so the groom goes in wearing a plain white (*bad*-white) *kittel* just as the High Priest wore no jewelry so the groom wears no jewelry.” However, in this analogy the groom invites his bride into the most holy place with him. Since she has made herself ready (in the holy place) she can now enter in the MHP with her Groom ***“that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.” (Ps. 27:4)***. Also, in Psalm 91:1,2,4 it states, ***“He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow (tsel – shade/shadow) of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge (machseh – refuge/shelter), my stronghold whom I will trust.” v.4 “He shall cover thee (sakak – overshadow, cover, protect) with feathers, and under his wings (kanaph – garment) shall thou trust:”*** The groom’s bride is protected by Him during this ceremony. Though the bride “made herself ready” now through faith she gets to see the beauty of her groom face to face, ***“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1 Cor.13:12)***

5) The Wedding Feast

- The wedding feast was the highlight of the wedding ceremony. It consisted of seven days of food, music and celebration.
- The main purpose of the wedding feast was to honor the Groom. All of the guests of the wedding were expected to compose and sing songs and poems to the Groom. However, the highlight was that the bride was to compose a special song/poem about her personal experience and love to the Groom, ***“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: Many shall see it, and fear, And shall trust in Jehovah (Ps. 40:3).”*** Also, ***“they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, [even] they that had been purchased out of the earth (Rev.14:3).”***

- Now that the blessed bridegroom has received his wife, he was to display her beauty and grace to all who are present (Feast of Tabernacles). To honor the groom, the bride was to put on her beautiful wedding garment that she had made during her year of preparation and would display her beauty to the bridegroom's friends, and the attendees, and return show her respect and admiration. Again this part the bride (the priesthood) represents Jesus throughout the universe as ambassadors delivering a unique message to the unfallen worlds of what the Groom did for His bride.
- Following the wedding feast, the bridegroom and bride would live together as husband and wife for the remainder of their lives as Rev. 3:12 states, ***"Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out..."*** We would become "priests" in His temple forever, (See also Ex.19; Rev. 1:6, 1 Peter 2:5,9)

Symbolism

The wedding feast is also represented as "Sukkot" or the Feast of Tabernacles. Though it was the last of the 7 feasts, it is also known as the feast of Ingathering. This gathering is of all of the fruits that came into full harvest or maturity similar to the bride "making herself ready" as in Rev. 7:9-17.

Also, the redeemed people of God from all nations are gathered before the throne of God, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and they are singing praise to God for his salvation. The one who is seated on the throne shelters them, and they hunger and thirst no more, the heat of the sun no more strikes them, and the Lamb is their shepherd and leads them to springs of the water of life.

In Rev 19:7 ***"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."*** there is an explicit call to be glad, honor and give "honor" (glory = doxa = character) to Christ in celebration of the wedding of the groom (Lamb), **because**, ***"the bride has made herself ready."*** This is understood in a Feast of Tabernacles setting, particularly in view of the messianic eschatology of the Feast of Tabernacles of Zechariah.

The feast was seven days and it went from Sabbath to Sabbath. The people lived in the booths (tabernacle) seven days. Therefore, we have the bride under the shadow or wing (covering= booth) of her husband providing all her needs as Rev. 21 & 22 state. Jesus (Groom) is the canopy (*chuppah*) over His bride ***Hosea 14:7 says, "They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden."*** And ***Isa. 4:6 says, "I will be for a shade by day and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain."***

Symbolism of Jesus in the Marriage

- 1) Jesus **Covenant arrangement** (*shidukhin*) = **God set forth His everlasting Covenant with Abraham and his decedents** (Gen. 17:7; Gal. 3:29) **The Messiah anointed to heal, set free, open hearts,** (Isa. 61:1 ; Luke 4:18) **.He gave** (Jn. 3:16) **. All are one in Christ and heirs according to the promise** (Gal. 3:27-29)
 - Jesus is consecrated for His bride through the *Mikvah* = He is baptized (Mt. 3:16)
 - Jesus prepared Himself to seal the Covenant arrangement by His blood (Heb. 9:15-17)
- 2) Jesus begins His **Betrothal** (*erusin*) to His bride (church) = The bride's property became the betrothed and the groom's the bride's. The marriage officially began and the each other's life became each

other's inheritance. Thus, Jesus inherits his bride (church) and the bride (church) inherits her husband (Christ) (Eph. 1:14,18).

- Jesus marriage vows of the New Covenant are covenantal promises or pledges.
- Jesus prepares Himself before the betrothal feast (last supper) by being tested 40 days in the wilderness to receive the inheritance where Israel failed the test wilderness. See Deut. 6,8.
- The Last supper is the betrothal feast and promises to His bride that He will not drink the new wine until the wedding feast in heaven.
- His death is the first gift of the bride price (dowry)
- The Holy Spirit is the second gift of the bride price to the bride inviting all to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The preparation period

- The waiting or preparation period is what the church is currently in. The Groom is delayed because He waits for the bride to be "made ready" using the gifts the groom gave her to be prepared, just as King Xerxes gave Esther the gifts for her purification.

- 3) **The Wedding Ceremony** = The groom meets his bride for the first time face-to-face. *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."* 1 Cor. 13:12 Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement
- 4) **The Wedding Feast** = 7 day wedding feast similar to wedding ceremony feast with apostles. Sukkot = Feast of Tabernacles

Wedding Ceremony as related to Feasts

- 1) Covenant arrangement = Passover (Pesach) = Heb. 9:14-18:
- 2) Betrothal ceremony = Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) / Feast of First fruits (Bikkurim)=
- 3) Preparation / Purification = Pentecost (Shavuot)
Near the end of Preparation = Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HoshShanah)= warning that the Bridegroom is coming soon
- 4) Wedding Ceremony = Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) =
- 5) Wedding Feast = Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) = Zech. 8:1-8, Rev. 19:7-9,21,22

Priestly Characteristics

How the 144,000 (the bride) will reflect the priesthood fully

Priest = **Hebrew** (Kohen and Kohana) = "to mediate" **Greek** = (hierous) = sacred, holy

1. Priesthood and Firstborn = Numbers 8:18 (Levites represent the firstborn)
2. Royal priesthood = 1 Peter 2 :9
3. Knowledge and Priesthood = 2 Chron. 30:22
4. Purity of the priesthood = Num. 8:6,15,21; Lev.13:22
5. Priests were rabbis (teachers) = Deut. 24:8; Ps. 132:9
6. Priests are the first fruits of Christ = Neh.. 10:37; Jer.2:3
7. Priests are anointed = Ex.28,29 Lev.8, Ex. 29:7,29; Lev. 4:3,5;

8. Inaugurated into the sanctuary Lev.8
9. Priests get new names = Isa. 62:2 ; Rev. 2:17; 3:12
10. Imbued with the holy spirit = Ex. 29:7,29; Lev. 4:3,5;
11. Priests teach = 2 Chr. 3:22 ; 35:3 ; Nehemiah 8:9
12. Washing/baptism of priests = Ex. 29:4 ; 30:20,21; Ex. 40:31,32; Lev. 8:6
13. Wear white linen = Lev. 8:2,6 ; Zech.3:4
14. Consecrated for 7 days = Lev. 8:33
15. Dedicated with blood = Lev. 8:24
16. Have their hands “filled” = Ezekiel 10:2
17. Holy Priesthood = 1 Peter 2:5
18. They offer up spiritual sacrifices = 1 Peter 2:5
19. They are a spiritual temple = 1 Peter 2:5
20. They are Living stones = 1 Peter 2:5
21. Offering up spiritual sacrifices = 1 Pet. 2:5
22. They are a holy nation 1 Peter 2:9
23. They are God’s possession = 1 Peter 2:9
24. Covenant of an everlasting priesthood = Num. 25:13