

Rosh Hashanah: The Wedding of the Messiah

by Eddie Chumney, Hebraic Heritage Newsgroup

The Bible is a marriage covenant. Both the Tanach (Old Testament) and the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) describe how G-d through the Mashiach (Messiah), the Bridegroom, is in the process of marrying His bride, the believers in Him who will ultimately live and dwell with Him forever.

G-d ordained and established marriage and its divine sanctity in the Torah, the very first book of the Bible, Genesis, when He brought Adam and Eve together to become one flesh (**GEN 2:21-24**). In doing so, we have a vivid foreshadowing of the Messiah being married to those who would believe upon Him. Let's examine this closer.

Adam is a type of the Messiah Yeshua. Adam was made after the likeness of Yeshua (**ROM 5:14**). Yeshua (Jesus) was made in the likeness of Adam (**PHI 2:8**). In fact, Yeshua is called the last Adam (**1CO 15:45-47**). In **GEN 2:21**, G-d had a deep sleep fall upon Adam. Sleep is synonymous with death (**DAN 12:2**; **JOH 11:11-14**; **1CO 15:51-54**; **EPH 5:14**). The deep sleep that G-d caused to fall upon Adam is a picture of the crucifixion and death of Yeshua, as Messiah ben Joseph. G-d brought a deep sleep upon Adam so He could take a rib from the side of his flesh. This required the shedding of blood. This is a picture of Yeshua who was pierced in the side of His flesh, shedding His own blood when He hung on the tree (**JOH 19:34**).

From the rib of Adam, G-d made Eve. Likewise, by the death of Yeshua and faith in Him, G-d established the assembly of believers known in Hebrew as the kehilat. The believers in the Messiah, His bride, become wedded to Him by faith. This marriage can be seen in the Tanach (Old Testament) as well as in **JER 23:5-6**, as it is written, "... this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (**JER 23:6**). In **JER 33:15-16**, it is written, "...this is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS". So from these passages in Jeremiah, we can see that a wedding is taking place. Therefore, by accepting, trusting, and believing in the Messiah, the bride of Messiah, His followers, become one with Him. These people would include both Jew and non-Jews who have lived since Adam and would include Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon as well as the prophets.

G-d gave the wedding customs, service, and ceremonies to the Jewish people (**ROM 3:2; 9:4**) to teach us about the Messiah Yeshua (**COL 2:16-17**). With this in mind, let's examine the biblical wedding ceremony that G-d 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. The selection of the bride

The bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom. The father would send his trusted servant, known as the agent of the father, to search out the bride. An excellent example of this can be seen in **GEN 24**. In this chapter, Abraham (a type of G-d the Father) wishes to secure a bride for Isaac (a type of Messiah) and sends his servant Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit [Ruach HaKodesh]) to do this task (**GEN 24:2-4; 15:2**). It is the role of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) to convict the world of sin and lead them to G-d (**JOH 16:7-8**). Just as the bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom, so the believers in the Messiah are chosen by G-d (**JOH 15:16**). The bridegroom chose the bride and lavished his love upon her and she returned his love. This can be seen in **EPH 5:25**, as it is written, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself of it." In **GEN 24**, Rebekah consented to marry Isaac even before she ever met him. Today, the believers in the Messiah Yeshua consent to become the bride of Messiah even though we have never seen Him. **1PE 1:8** speaks of this, as it is written, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

2. A bride price was established

A price would have to be paid for the bride. The agreed upon price was called a mohar in Hebrew. Yeshua, being our bridegroom, paid a very high price for His bride, the body of believers. The price He paid was His life. Yeshua considered the price He had to pay for His bride before His death as He went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray in **MAT 26:39**, as it is written, "And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Yeshua was, in essence, saying, "Father, You have chosen this bride and I have agreed to the terms, but do

you realize the price that is being asked for her?" Our mohar, our bride price, was His life. **1PE 1:18-19** says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In **1CO 6:20** it is written, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

3. **The bride and groom are betrothed to each other**

This is the first stage of marriage known as **kiddushin**. I have spoken at length of betrothal in Chapter 6, concerning Shavuot. Remember, betrothal is the first of two steps in the marriage process. Betrothal in Hebrew is known as **erusin** or **kiddushin**. Betrothal legally binds the bride and the groom together in a marriage contract, except they do not physically live together. Historically, G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai (**JER 2:2**; **HOS 2:19-20**). Whenever you accept the Messiah into your heart and life, you become betrothed to Him while living on the earth.

4. **A written document is drawn up, known as a ketubah. This betrothal contract is called, in Hebrew, a shitre erusin**

The **ketubah** is the marriage contract that states the bride price, the promises of the groom, and the rights of the bride. The word **ketubah** means "that which is written." The groom promised to work for her, to honor, support, and maintain her in truth, to provide food, clothing, and necessities, and to live together with her as husband and wife. The **ketubah** was the unalienable right of the bride. The **ketubah** must be executed and signed prior to the wedding ceremony. The Bible is the believer's **ketubah**. All the promises that G-d provided for the believers in the Messiah are legally ours, as it is written in **2CO 1:20**, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen...."

5. **The bride must give her consent**

As we saw in Chapter 6, which dealt with Shavuot (Pentecost), G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai as stated in **JER 2:2**. Israel consented to the marriage proposal from G-d and said, "I do," as it is written in **EXO 24:3**. Likewise, the personal application (halacha) to those who desire the Messiah to come into their hearts and lives is to accept His invitation to do so by faith, as it is written in **ROM 10:8-10**: What, then, does it say? The Word is near you in your mouth and in your heart: that is the word about trust which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgments and thus continues toward deliverance (**ROM 10:8-10** Jewish New Testament Version).

So, even today, to become the bride of Messiah you must still say "I do" to Him.

6. **Gifts were given to the bride and a cup called the cup of the covenant was shared between the bride and the groom**

The rite of betrothal (**erusin**) is completed when the groom gives something of value to the bride and she accepts it. The gift most often given today is the ring. When the groom places the ring on the bride's finger, the rite of betrothal is completed. This completed rite is known in Hebrew as **kiddushin**, which means "sanctification."

The gifts to the bride are symbols of love, commitment, and loyalty. The gift G-d gives to those who accept the Messiah is the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) (**JOH 14:26**; **15:26-27**; **ACT 2:38**; **2CO 1:21-22**). When Yeshua ascended to Heaven, He gave gifts to men (**EPH 4:7-8**). These gifts included righteousness (**ROM 5:17-18**), eternal life (**ROM 6:23**), grace (**ROM 5:12,14-15**), faith (**EPH 2:8-9**), and other spiritual gifts (**1CO 12:1,4**). These included wisdom, knowledge, healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (**1CO 12:8-11**), as well as the gifts of helps and administration (**1CO 12:28**).

In addition, at this time the cup of the covenant was shared and sealed between the bride and the groom with the drinking of wine. In doing so, the couple drinks from a common cup. The cup is first given to the groom to sip, and then is given to the bride. This cup, known as the cup of the covenant, is spoken of in **JER 31:31-33**,

as it is written: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Yeshua spoke of the cup of the New Covenant (Brit Hadashah) in **LUK 22:20**.

7. The bride had a mikvah (water immersion), which is a ritual of cleansing

Mikvah is a Hebrew word that means "pool" or "body of water." Mikvah is a ceremonial act of purification by the immersion in water. It indicates a separation from a former way to a new way. In the case of marriage, it indicates leaving an old life for a new life with your spouse (**GEN 2:23-24**; **EPH 5:31**). Immersing in the mikvah is considered spiritual rebirth. The reason is that a mikvah has the power to change a person completely. Concerning the marriage to Israel at Mount Sinai, G-d said in **EZE 16:8-9**, as it is written, "...I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee... and thou becamest Mine. Then washed I thee with water...." The washing, or immersion, here refers to that of Israel before the people received the Torah when G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai (**EXO 19:14-15**). Yeshua spoke to the Pharisee, Nicodemus, that he must be born anew (immersed) to enter into the Kingdom of G-d (**JOH 3:1-7**). The believers in the Messiah are to be immersed in the name of Yeshua (**ACT 19:4**). The Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) is the immerser of G-d (**LUK 3:16**; **ACT 1:5**; **11:15-16**).

8. The bridegroom departed, going back to his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber

At this point, the bridegroom leaves for his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber for his bride. It was understood to be the man's duty to go away to be with his father, build a house, and prepare for the eventual wedding. Before he goes, though, he will make a statement to the bride. "I go to prepare a place for you; if I go, I will return again unto you." This is the same statement Yeshua made in **JOH 14:1-3** before He went to His father's house in Heaven, as it is written: Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Fathers' 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.

9. The bride was consecrated and set apart for a period of time while the bridegroom was away building the house

Before the bridegroom could go and get the bride, the groom's father had to be satisfied that every preparation had been made by the son. Only then could he give permission to the son to go and get the bride. In other words, while the bridegroom was working on the bridal chamber, it was the father who "okayed" the final bridal chamber. The bridegroom did not know when his father would declare the bridal chamber fit and send him to go get his bride. This is exactly what Yeshua was referring to in **MAR 13:32-37**.

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. Yeshua referred to this in **MAR 13:32-37** and **MAT 25:1-13**. 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?" This was the thought that Peter answered in **2PE 3:1-13**.

10. The bridegroom would return with a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom comes." 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 (**MAT 25:6**) and with the blowing of a **shofar** (trumpet) (**1TH 4:16-17**; **REV 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 (MAT 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.

11. 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 is the full marriage, known in Hebrew as nesu'in

The bride and groom will go to the wedding chamber, or **chadar** in Hebrew, where the marriage will be consummated. They will stay in that wedding chamber for seven days, or a week. At the end of the seven days, the bride and groom will come out from the wedding chamber. This can be seen in **JOE 2:16**.

The word week in Hebrew is **shavuah**. It means a "seven." It can mean seven days or seven years. An example of the Hebrew word for week (**shavuah**) meaning seven years can be found in **DAN 9:24**, as it is written, "Seventy weeks [**shavuah, 490 years**] are determined upon thy people..." and in 9:27, "And he [the false Messiah known as the antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [**shavuah, seven years**]...." The week referred to in **DAN 9:27** is known to Bible believers as the tribulation period. The Jewish people understand this time to be the birthpangs of the Messiah known in Hebrew eschatology as the Chevlay shel Mashiach. This is taken from **JER 30:5-7**. From this we can see that the believers in the Messiah will be with the Messiah in Heaven for His wedding while the earth will be experiencing the seven-year tribulation period, or the Chevlay shel Mashiach, in Hebrew.

12. Finally, there would be a marriage supper for all the guests invited by the father of the bride

The bride and the groom would be in the wedding chamber for seven days. When the bride and the groom initially went into the wedding chamber, the friend of the bridegroom stood outside the door. All the assembled guests of the wedding gathered outside, waiting for the friend of the bride-groom to announce the consummation of the marriage, which was relayed to him by the groom. John the Baptist referred to this in **JOH 3:29**. At this signal, great rejoicing broke forth (**JOH 3:29**). The marriage was consummated on the first night (**GEN 29:23**). The bloodstained linen from this night was preserved. It was proof of the bride's virginity (**DEU 22:13-21**).

On the wedding day, the bridegroom is seen as a king and the bride as a queen. During the consummation of the marriage, the bridegroom (Yeshua) will be crowned King over all the earth and the bride (the believers in Yeshua, the Messiah) will live with Him and rule with Him forever. The crowning of the King and the marriage can be seen in Isaiah 62:3-7. At the end of the week (seven-year tribulation, or birthpangs of the Messiah), the marriage supper will take place. The marriage supper will not take place in Heaven. After the marriage, the bride and Groom will return to earth. The marriage supper will be taking place on earth and only the invited guests of the Father of the Groom (G-d the Father) will be present at the banquet meal. This can be seen in **REV 19:7-16 & 20:4**. Yeshua spoke of the marriage supper and the banquet in **LUK 12:35-38** and **MAT 8:11**. The wedding supper is a theme of the festival of Sukkot, which will be discussed further in a later chapter. During Sukkot, the people were instructed by G-d to build a temporary shelter. One of the things G-d instructed the people to do is eat there. When they eat, they are to set a plate for seven different people. Among the seven whom a plate is set for are Abraham (Avraham), Isaac (Yitzchak), and Jacob (Ya'akov). This is what Yeshua was referring to in **MAT 8:11**.

The unbelievers in the Messiah will attend a separate banquet where the fowls of the air will eat their flesh. This can be seen in **REV 19:17-18**.

The home of the bride was Jerusalem and it was the bridegroom who came to the bride to dwell with her. It is from Jerusalem that the believers in the Messiah during the Messianic age, or Millennium, will reign with the Messiah. This can be seen in **REV 21:1-3; EZE 43:1-2,7; ISA 2:2-4; MIC 4:1-5; and ZEC 2:10-12**.

In concluding this section on the wedding, whenever anyone hears the message of the basar (gospel), it is a wedding proposal by G-d to accept Him and be a part of His bride. G-d desires that we accept His invitation and give Him our response of "I do." In fact, **REV 22:20** is a proposal by Yeshua Himself to accept Him and be a part of His bride. His message in this verse is "Come." Will you say, "I do" to the Messiah's proposal to you?