

Ancient Jewish Wedding	Christ and the Church
<p>1) In ancient Israel, brides were usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom. If the son was old enough, he would assist the father in the selection process. Many times the bride would not have seen her husband-to-be, but would have found out about him through the bridegroom's servant.</p>	<p>1) We have been chosen by God the Father to be in Christ, before the foundation of the world. (John 15:6, “You did not choose me, but I chose you...”). We have not seen our Bridegroom, but the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to us. (1 Peter 1:8, “Whom having not seen you love...”). We love Him because He first loved us.</p>
<p>2) A bride price was then paid for the bride. The price was paid to the father of the bride. Since the bride was purchased, she belonged to her husband.</p>	<p>2) The highest possible price was paid for us, the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 7:23). We are no longer our own, we belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19).</p>
<p>3) The bride-to-be was then considered to be betrothed or engaged. At the betrothal ceremony, a marriage contract or covenant document was presented to the father of the bride-to-be. This contract was a list of promises that the husband vowed to carry out. Include were promises to provide shelter, clothe, work for and honor the bride-to-be.</p>	<p>3) The New Testament contains every promise and provision for us from our soon coming Bridegroom. All the promises in our covenant are for us to receive by faith. Our Bridegroom promises to clothe us, feed us, provide shelter for us, and meet our every need according to his riches in glory.</p>
<p>4) The prospective bride would then respond to the proposed marriage contract, by saying basically, “I will go” or “I do”.</p>	<p>4) Romans 10:9 says, “<i>If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the</i></p>

	<i>dead you shall be saved...”</i> . This is how the New Covenant bride says “I will go” or “I do”.
5) When the terms of the covenant contract were accepted a cup of wine was shared between the bridegroom and the betrothed bride to seal the marriage covenant. Later at the wedding feast a second cup of wine would be shared.	5) When we take the cup of Holy Communion, we remember our Heavenly Bridegroom, the price He paid for us with His blood and our covenant relationship with Him (Luke 22:20).
6) Betrothal included the giving of gifts by the bridegroom to his bride. Many times the bridegroom gave an object of great value to his betrothed bride – something to help her remember him while they were apart. Eventually the customary gift became a ring.	6) Our Lord and Savior has given us many gifts. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and Romans chapter 12 mentions some of them. But the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift that Our Lord Jesus has given to his Bride. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him.
7) The bride-to-be would then go through a ceremonial ritual where she would be immersed in a pool of water used for purification. This custom represents a separation from an old life to a new life – from life as a single woman to life as a married woman. It also symbolizes a change in status and authority from being under her father to being under that of her husband.	7) Part of becoming the Bride of Christ is water baptism. When we are immersed in water, we are declaring our old selves dead to sin and no longer under the authority of the evil one. We are alive to God and submitted to our Heavenly Bridegroom.
8) Once the marriage covenant was sealed, the bridegroom left his bride to go to his father’s house to prepare a wedding chamber for her.	8) When Jesus Christ ascended back to the Father, He said in John 14:2, “... <i>I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again</i>

He could be gone up to twelve months. During this time, the bride would prepare herself for the return of her bridegroom. Although the bridegroom was away, she would be comforted by the promise of his return and she would remember him because of the precious gift of value he had given to her.

and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also". Our Bridegroom is preparing our bridal chamber for us. The Holy Spirit is with us continually. While He is away we should be faithful and spiritually alert and ready. We should be consecrated, set apart, separated for our Bridegroom only. **Song of Songs 4:12 says, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring up, a fountain sealed."**

<p>9) A bride in ancient Israel had no idea what day or hour her bridegroom would return for her. She had to always be in a state of readiness. The bridegroom himself didn't know when he could claim his bride. Only his father knew. The father was the one who would decide when all was ready for the actual wedding, when the bridal chamber was complete, when the fullness of time had come. The bridegroom usually came late at night, near the midnight hour. The bride and her attendants would light their lamps and get ready to leave with him. There was much music, singing, dancing and celebration surrounding the return of the bride with the bridegroom.</p>	<p>9) Only God the Father knows the day and the hour of Christ our Bridegroom's return (Mark 13:32) We will hear a shout from heaven and the trumpet of God when the Lover of our souls returns (1 Thess.4:16) <i>"Arise, my love, my fair one and come away" (Song of Songs 2:10).</i></p>
<p>10) The bride was then physically lifted up and carried to a special place in the bridegroom's father's house where the bridegroom was waiting for her. They would then go off to the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage. The "best man" would stand outside of the bridal chamber and wait to hear the voice of the bridegroom tell him that the marriage was consummated. Then all the guests would begin a week-long celebration.</p>	<p>10) Then the Bride of Christ will be lifted up to meet her Bridegroom in the air (1 Thess 4:17). Then we will not only see our Bridegroom face to face but we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2). The precious Bride of Christ will join her Bridegroom in the most lavish marriage feast in history – the marriage supper of the Lamb - and she will tabernacle with Him in great joy and celebration (Revelation 19:6-9).</p>
<p>11) After seven days in the bridal chamber, the bride and groom would then join their guests for</p>	<p>11) After sharing the first communion with the disciples, Christ says in Matthew 26:29,</p>

<p>a huge marriage feast with beautiful music and celebration dancing. They would then share their second cup of wine. The Bride will then drink the second cup of covenant with the Bridegroom.</p>	<p><i>“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom”.</i> The marriage will then be complete. And our feasting will go on and on....</p>
<p>Read Ephesians 5:25-33 again. We must look at our earthly marriage relationship in light of God's ultimate and unconditional love. My prayer is that you prepare to enter into marriage, would view our earthly marriage relationship the way that the Lord sees His relationship with His precious bride, the church. And that we receive a deeper revelation of the covenant that we about to enter into.</p>	<p>What is the spiritual significance of all of this for us today? In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul writes, <i>“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.”</i></p>

The Rapture and the Jewish Wedding

There is an interesting parallel between a Jewish wedding and the Rapture. *Only a Pre-Tribulation Rapture will fit into this scenario.*

JEWISH WEDDING AND THE RAPTURE

There were three groups of people present at every Jewish wedding: the groom, the bride and the invited guests. There will also be three groups of people involved in the marriage of the Lamb.

The Groom

This is Jesus

2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:23-27

The Bride

This is the Church

*2 Corinthians 11:2, Eph. 5:22-32,
Revelation 21:9-10*

The Guests

Those saved after the Rapture

Matthew 25:1-10

THREE ASPECTS OF A JEWISH WEDDING

There were also 3 aspects of every Jewish wedding.
The same is true with the marriage of the Lamb.

The Wedding Contract (*Betrothal*)

This is when a person is saved by accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. ~ *2 Corinthians 11:2*

The Wedding Ceremony (*Groom receives Bride*)

This is the Rapture. *John 14:2-3* and *Revelation 19:7* literally reads, "The marriage of the Lamb came and His wife prepared herself." The wedding already occurred in heaven at the Rapture, and now the Lamb and the Church are about to return to earth for the wedding feast. This parallels what Jesus said in *Luke 12:36*, "And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding..."

The Wedding Feast (*Guests are invited to the celebration*)

This is the Second Coming. *Matthew 25:1-10*. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." *Revelation 19:9* A bride is not invited to her own wedding! The Church was married to Christ at the Rapture and the wedding feast will occur on earth after the Second Coming. Those people saved after the Rapture will be invited to participate in the wedding feast.

[reference](#)

WEDDINGS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

A Picture of the Messiah

What does Scripture mean when it refers to the church as a bride and Jesus as a bridegroom? Is this just flowery language? Is it merely indicating God's love for His people? Understanding ancient Jewish wedding practices makes the meaning of Scripture clear. The wedding is a picture of the covenant Jesus made and reveals His plans to return for His bride, the church. The people of ancient Israel understood what Jesus was going to do because they understood the model of the wedding. The analogy between a wedding and Christ and the Church is described in *Ephesians 5:31-32*, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two

will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery -- but I am talking about Christ and the church." The following overviews the practices of an ancient Jewish betrothal and wedding. In parallel, it shows how Jesus has fulfilled the betrothal portion of the wedding and how He may fulfill the remainder when He comes again for His bride, the church.

I. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Marriage Covenant and Bride Price

When a young man desired to marry a young woman in ancient Israel, he would prepare a contract or covenant to present to the young woman and her father at the young woman's home. The contract showed his willingness to provide for the young woman and described the terms under which he would propose marriage. The most important part of the contract was the bride price, the price that the young man was willing to pay to marry the young woman. This payment was to be made to the young woman's father in exchange for his permission to marry. The bride price was generally quite high. Sons were considered to be more valuable than daughters since they were physically more able to share in the work of farming and other heavy labor. The bride price compensated the young woman's family for the cost to raise a daughter and also indicated the love that the young man had for the young woman -- the young woman was very valuable to the young man! The

young man would go to the young woman's house with the contract and present his offer to the young woman and her father.

Jesus' Fulfillment: Marriage Covenant and Bride Price

Jesus came to the home of His bride (Earth) to present His marriage contract. The marriage contract provided by Jesus is the new covenant, which provides for the forgiveness of sins of God's people. Jesus paid the bride price with His life. At the last supper, when breaking bread, He spoke of the price He was paying: "...This is my body given for you..." *Luke 22:20*. In *Hebrews 8:15* it makes clear that Jesus died as the price for the new covenant: "...Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Other Scripture references include *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*, *1 Peter 1:18-19*, *Acts 20:28* and *John 3:29*. The marriage contract, the new covenant, is described throughout Scripture: "...This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*Jeremiah 31:31-34*

II. Ancient Wedding Practice:

The Cup

If the bride price was agreeable to the young woman's father, the young man would pour a glass of wine for the young woman. If the young woman drank the wine, it would indicate her acceptance of the proposal. At this point, the young man and young woman would be betrothed. Betrothal was legally binding, just like a marriage. The only difference was that the marriage was not yet consummated. A typical betrothal period was 1-2 years. During this time the bride and bridegroom each would be preparing for the marriage and wouldn't see each other.

Jesus' Fulfillment: The Cup

Just as the bridegroom would pour a cup of wine for the bride to drink to seal the marriage contract, so Jesus poured wine for His disciples. His words described the significance of the cup in representing the bride price for the marriage contract: Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." The disciples drank of the cup, thus accepting the contract. *Matthew 26:28-29*

III. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Gifts for the Bride

Next, the bridegroom would present the bride with special gifts. The purpose of these gifts was to show the bridegroom's appreciation of the bride. They were also intended to help her to remember him during the long betrothal period.

Jesus' Fulfillment: Gifts for the Bride

The gifts that Jesus gave us are the gifts of the Holy Spirit: We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit *1 John 4:13*. Jesus described this gift in *John 14:26*: But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

IV. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Mikveh

The bride would next partake of a Mikveh, or cleansing bath. Mikveh is the same word used for baptism. To this day in conservative Judaism a bride cannot marry without a Mikveh.

Jesus' Fulfillment: Mikveh

The Mikveh, or baptism that Jesus provided for His bride was baptism in the Holy Spirit. On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." *Acts 1:4*

V. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Preparing a Place

During the betrothal period, the bridegroom would prepare a wedding chamber for the honeymoon. This chamber was typically built in the bridegroom's father's house or on his father's property. The wedding chamber had to be a beautiful place to bring the bride. The bride and groom were to spend seven days there. The wedding chamber had to be built to the

groom's father's specifications. The young man could go for his bride only when his father approved. If the bridegroom was asked when the wedding was to be, he might well say "it is not for me to know, only my father knows".

Jesus' Fulfillment: Preparing a Place

Just as a bridegroom would have told his bride that he would go to prepare a place for her, so Jesus told His disciples: "...In my Father's house are many rooms or mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am *John 13:1-3*. In ancient Israel the bridegroom could get his bride only after his father approved. Similarly, Jesus said: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert ! You do not know when that time will come *Mark 13:32-33*."

VI. Ancient Wedding Practice:

A Waiting Bride Consecrated

While the bridegroom was preparing the wedding chamber, the bride was considered to be consecrated, set apart or "bought with a price". If she went out, she would wear a veil so others would know she was betrothed. During

this time she prepared herself for the marriage. She likely had saved money all her life for this time. She would purchase expensive cosmetics and learn to apply them to make herself more beautiful for the bridegroom. She wouldn't know when her groom would come for her, so she always had to be ready. Since bridegrooms typically came for their brides in the middle of the night, to "steal them away"(the groom would often come like a thief in the night, often around the midnight hour), the bride would have to have her lamp and her belongings ready at all times. Her sisters or bridesmaids would also be waiting, keeping their lamps trimmed in anticipation of the late night festivities.

Jesus' Fulfillment: A Waiting Bride Consecrated

We, God's people, are now consecrated, or set apart, waiting for the return of our bridegroom at The Rapture. We should be spending this time preparing ourselves for Jesus' return. Jesus used a parable of ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom to describe the need to be alert for His return. "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom...The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are gone

out.' "'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' "But He replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

VII. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Bridegroom Comes for His Bride

When the bridegroom's father deemed the wedding chamber ready, the father would tell the bridegroom that all was ready and to get His bride. The bridegroom would abduct his bride secretly, like a thief at night and take her to the wedding chamber. As the bridegroom approached the bride's home, he would shout and blow the shofar (ram's horn trumpet) so that she had some warning to gather her belongings to take into the wedding chamber. The bridegroom and his friends would come into the bride's house and get the bride and her bridesmaids.

Jesus' Fulfillment: Bridegroom Comes for His Bride

Just as the bridegroom would come for the bride in the middle of the night, with a shout and the sound of a shofar, so the Lord will come for us. 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. 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. Therefore encourage each other with these words. Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*

VIII. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Seven Days in the Wedding Chamber

The bridegroom would take his bride to the wedding chamber where they would spend seven days. The bridegroom's friend would wait outside the door of the wedding chamber. When the marriage was consummated, the bridegroom would tell his friend through the door, and the friend would announce it to the assembled guests. The guests would celebrate for seven days until the bride and bridegroom emerged from the wedding chamber. At this time the groom would bring his wife out and introduce her to the community.

Jesus' Fulfillment:

Seven Days in the Wedding Chamber

Ancient Jewish eschatology taught that a seven year "time of trouble" would come upon the earth before the coming of the Messiah. During that time of trouble, the righteous would be resurrected and would enter the wedding chamber where they would be protected from the time of trouble. Today that seven year period is referred to, by Christians, as the Tribulation, and as Birth Pangs by the Jews. After 7 years in Heaven the Groom, Christ, will bring His wife to Earth and at the time of His Second Coming He will introduce her to the community on Earth.

IX. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Marriage Supper

After seven days in the wedding chamber, the bride and bridegroom would emerge and participate in a feast with friends and family. There would be joyous celebrating during this feast. The feast would conclude the wedding celebration.

Jesus' Fulfillment: Marriage Supper

As the bride and bridegroom celebrated with a joyous wedding supper, so Jesus and His bride, the church will celebrate the marriage. Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty

reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" . *Revelation 19:6-9*

X. Ancient Wedding Practice:

Depart for Home

Jesus' Fulfillment: Depart for Home

Just as the bride and bridegroom left the marriage supper to go to the home that the bridegroom had prepared, so Jesus and His bride will depart for their new home. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes... One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me,

"Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

From the pattern of the ancient wedding practices, we see that, like the bridegroom of ancient times, Jesus came to the home of His bride for the betrothal, made a covenant with His bride and sealed it with a glass of wine, paid the bride price with His life and sent His bride gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We, the betrothed (Christ's Church) currently await the return of our Bridegroom to take us to the wedding chamber (the rapture) to spend seven years (while the tribulation occurs on Earth). We will then celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and depart with our Bridegroom for our new home, the new Jerusalem. ~ *Revelation 21:1-4,*

reference

**Christ Said He Would Build One Church, His Church,
And The Gates Of Hell Would Not Prevail Against It.**

Matthew 16:18

**Don't Confuse Corporate Christian Churches
With Christ's One and Only True Church.**

Christ's Church Is Established

In The Hearts Of Born Again Believers Directly!

John 3:3-7