

The *Rapture* of the Bride of Christ

The Bridegroom is coming for His Bride



(Formerly called the Rapture of the Church)³

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Part of the

Doctrines of the Bible Series



A series of Bible studies to help guide the believer in lessons of his faith. Answering the question “Why” he believes what he believes.

Ephesians 4:14, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”

Hebrews 6:1-3, “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits.”

A Companion Study to the Book of Revelation

I want to tell you of an ancient secret, a mystery of the ages ... The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church. To an unbelieving world ... this is a mystery.

1Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB), ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Romans 8:23 (NASB), ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Titus 2:13 (NASB), ¹³looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NASB), ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised ^[a]imperishable, and we will be changed.

John 14:1-3 (NASB), “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be.

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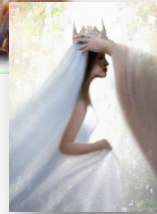
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A Point of Clarification First

Before we get started in our study of the Rapture, there is a basic issue that needs to be clarified right from the beginning, let me explain. Our churches today are made up of basically three groups of people, 1st the truly saved and born again, 2nd is the “I think I’m saved” group (but are not) and the 3rd group are the ones who know they are lost and hopefully this is why they came to church. For the New Testament group of “Born Again” believers (from the cross to the rapture) are known in scripture as the “Bride of Christ,” or “Bride.”¹

Having your name on the church role is not what determines for you, heaven or hell. Being good does not determine for you, heaven or hell. As everyone will agree it is having that personal relationship of salvation through the blood of Jesus, sealed by contract through Grace, which determines heaven or hell for you.

Jesus gave a parable of 10 Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13). In the parable only half of the virgins were ready the other half had to go get ready and missed out on the Bridegroom and His coming. The Rapture is the same way; it is for those who have made themselves ready, keep His commandments and truly long for His coming. The true Bride is eager for the return of her Bridegroom.

Therefore we can correctly say that what we have called for so long the “Rapture of the Church” is in fact the “Rapture of the Bride of Christ.” Even though the Bride of Christ is the church, it can also be said that not all of the church is the Bride.

I have tried to make that distinction in this study and I believe it is a correct one based on what I believe the Holy Spirit has shown to me with much conviction.

Isaiah 54:5 “For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.”

Revelation 19:7 “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;”

Revelation 21:9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹ Bride of Christ: https://www.openbible.info/topics/the_bride_of_christ

The **RAPTURE**

of the Bride of Christ from a “Pre-Tribulational” Perspective

The Open Door of

Revelation 4:1

“Come Up Here”

Revelation chapter four verse one is the place where dispensational, pre-Tribulationist place the rapture of the **Bride of Christ**. The purpose of this study is to explain the reasons why we hold to this particular interpretation of the Scriptures, and not to invent our own version of it. I know that not everyone agrees with this view, however, not everyone agrees with any view.

Knowing the prophecies and cultural motivations for the words and the actions of the Lord, will help us understand why Jesus did and spoke as He did. Until we stand before Him in glory, we keep studying and living graciously before the Lord. If this is your conviction then I’m sure you will find some Pearls of Truth here to hold onto.

I would like to now share with those who are still critical and have their doubts as to a pre-Tribulational Rapture. I will endeavor to present what I believe the Lord has shown to me concerning this matter. It is true and given for the rightly-divided word of God as taught in scripture.

part 1

To Answer the Critics



To Answer the Critics²



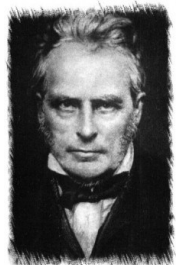
ome commentators are saying quite openly and with boldness that the Pre-Tribulational Rapture doctrine has been fundamentally discredited ... they could not be more wrong.

The argument seems to be that the Pre-Tribulational Rapture is a doctrine that has only been taught and believed since the mid-1800s. Supporters of this idea want us to believe that the teaching is false, because it is a “Modern invention.”

Proponents like Marvin Rosenthal postulated his view saying that before the 1800s the rapture was not taught in the Christian church at all. They wrongly go on to state that a young fifteen-year-old Scottish woman named **Margaret MacDonald** is the true originator of the modern Pre-Tribulational Rapture teaching (about 1830) and that she received this information through independent spiritual revelation. The unspoken assertion here is that this revelation was demonic in origin. As the argument goes, **John Darby**, about this same time stole the teaching (some called it inventing the teaching) and shared it with the likes of **C.I. Scofield** to include in his reference Bible. The teaching was to later be inserted into Dr. Frank C. Thompson’s Bible (Thompson Chain Reference Bible), and Dr. Finis Dake author of **the Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible**.



C.I. Scofield



John Darby has been incorrectly credited with “inventing” the Rapture.

Some even go so far as to argue that the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture was completely unknown and unheard of before 1800, therefore lacking any legitimate creditability for today's Church.

With so much confusion by Christian and non-Christian alike I decided to look into the claims a little closer for myself. In the following pages I present to you three arguments for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. **First** – The Historic, **Second** – Message to the last church, **Third** – The Jewish customs pertaining to matrimony. What does the Bridegroom say?



² <https://www.prophecyupdate.com/what-the-ancient-church-fathers-believed.html>



#1

Historical - As to the Pre-Tribulational Rapture taught before the 1800s?

With a desire to find the evidence I knew had to be already out there, it didn't take much time for the Lord to lead me to the historical records that answered this question rather completely.

History of the Rapture Doctrine³

(The Oldest Recorded Christian End Time Belief)



midst all the different beliefs, there is one theory that is older than any other form of recorded Christian eschatology. This theory is termed **HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM** by Bible scholars because of the strength of its historic authenticity.

Many of the disciples had disciples of their own. The Apostle John had several men he had disciple that had written the records of John's beliefs. One of these men was named **Polycarp**. Jerome records the following concerning Polycarp, "Polycarp, disciple of the apostle John and by him ordained bishop of Smyrna was chief of all Asia, where he saw and had as teachers some of the apostles and of those who had seen the Lord." It is believed that John was writing to Polycarp when he wrote to the church in Smyrna, Revelation 2:8-10.

Polycarp did not have written accounts of his end time beliefs, but several of his pupils had many written records of what they were taught, leaving no doubt of their end time beliefs. Because so many of Polycarp's students were unanimous on the views, it is extremely probable that they were taught this view from Polycarp who was directly disciple by John, the author of Revelation, the Book of John, I John, II John, and III John. Below I offer you a small portion of what Polycarp's students wrote and other church fathers.

³ <http://jacobhildebrant.blogspot.com/2010/11/history-of-rapture-part-3.html>

The Witness of the early Church Father

- **Irenaeus** (130 A.D. – 202 AD)



Irenaeus was a disciple of **Polycarp**. Polycarp learned his Christian faith from the **Apostle John**. There could be no better tutor other than the Lord Jesus himself. Both Polycarp and Irenaeus knew John personally. Irenaeus later became bishop of the church in Lyons, France and is famous for his five volume treatise, “**Against Heresies**,” which described and challenged all false teaching from the emerging cults of his day.

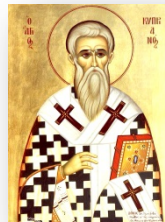
Irenaeus believed in the three and a half year reign of the Antichrist as ruler of the world before the Second Coming of Christ. He also believed in a literal millennial reign of Christ on earth following the Second Coming and in the resurrection of the just. Irenaeus also believed in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. In his writing, “Against Heresies” 5:29 he wrote:

“And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly **caught up** from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, and neither shall be.’ For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.”

Note Irenaeus’ use of the phrase, “*caught up*.” It is the exact same Rapture terminology used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4. The word used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, is “*harpazo*,” meaning to be “*caught up*.” Irenaeus believed that the Rapture of the Church would occur prior to the beginning of the Tribulation.

The Witness of the Early Church Father

- **Cyprian** (200 A.D. – 258 AD)



Cyprian, the Bishop of the early church at Carthage was beheaded for his faith in 258 AD and was a great pillar of the early church. He shepherded his church through intense Roman persecution and was well known for his eloquent treatises in defense of the faith. In his work “Treatise of Cyprian” he wrote:

“We who see that terrible things have begun, and know that still more terrible things are imminent, may regard it as the greatest advantage to depart from it as quickly as possible. Do you not give God thanks, do you not congratulate yourself, that by an early departure you are taken away, and delivered from the shipwrecks and disasters that are imminent? Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which

snatches us hence, and sets us free from the snares of the world and restores us to paradise and the kingdom.”

Like Irenaeus, Cyprian, a highly prominent early church father believed in a “...early deliverance” for believers who would be “delivered” from judgments which would be devastating and global in nature. He taught that the Body of Christ would be delivered from the **Day of the Lord**.

Cyprian taught his followers that, “God has not appointed us to wrath, but salvation...” (1 Thess. 5:9), and joyfully encouraged his church to expect to be “taken away” before the Tribulation begins. Indeed, he exhorted his church to eagerly anticipate the mansions Jesus had gone to heaven to prepare for them individually, as detailed in John 14.



The Witness of the Early Church Father

- **Ephraim** The Syrian (306 A.D. – 373 AD)

There is a genuine sense of urgency about Ephraim’s writings. A deacon in the large church in Syria he later became the Bishop of the church at Nisibis. In his work, “The Last Times” – Two, Ephraim wrote:

“See to it that this sentence be not fulfilled among you of the prophet who declares: ‘Woe to those who desire to see the day of the Lord!’ For all the saints and elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins. And so, brothers most dear to me, it is the eleventh hour, and the end of the world comes to the harvest, and angels, armed and prepared, hold sickles in their hands, awaiting the empire of the Lord.

And we think that the earth exists with blind infidelity, arriving at its downfall early. Commotions are brought forth, wars of diverse peoples and battles and incursions of the barbarians threaten, and our regions shall be desolated, and we neither become very much afraid of the report nor of the appearance, in order that we may at least do penance; because they hurl fear at us, and we do not wish to be changed, although we at least stand in need of penance for our actions!”

Ephraim believed that all Christians should know that as the Day of the Lord approached the church should be able to recognize the signs of the times. He also clearly linked the Old Testament Day of the Lord with the New Testament forthcoming Great Tribulation.

This is just a flavor of early church teaching. Each and every church father, where their writings exist, testifies to a belief in the Rapture of the church. Each of these fathers all place this Rapture of the church before the Day of the Lord, or the Great Tribulation.

These writings on their own do not prove the existence of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture, nor can they be regarded in any way as authoritative as Scripture. They do, however, clearly demonstrate that the teaching of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture is not a “modern invention” that supposedly began in the 1800s.

What their writings also prove, without doubt, is that the teaching of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture has been a part of Christian beliefs since the earliest days of the Apostles.

Jesus is coming soon...

John 14:1-3, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9, “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Testimony of Enoch:

Jude v14, “And **Enoch** also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints...”

The introductory phrase "Enoch, the Seventh from Adam" is also found in 1 Enoch (1 En. 60:8), though not in the Old Testament. In the New Testament this Enoch prophesies "to" ungodly men, that God shall come with His holy ones to judge and convict them ([Jude 1:14–15](#)).

It looks to me that this so-called modern invention has been talked about and preached from as far back as Enoch. Paul repeats it in his letters to the church in 1Thessalonians 1:10, 2:19, 3:13,4:13-18, 5:9. Finally it is the Bride of Christ called the “*Armies*” upon white horses, which follow their Bridegroom Jesus out of heaven (ref. Zech. 14:4-5).



#2

A Special **Message** for the Last Church Age.



Noah was given a message of the coming of a worldwide flood. He had roughly 120 years to prepare before the event would occur. The Ark would save Noah and his family and all the animals by two's. The Ark would mean safety high above the flood waters to come. They would rise far **ABOVE** the destruction and tribulation that the event caused. Noah preached to the people to repent, but scripture does not mention anyone ever repented. I would say that people then did as they do today; they laugh and mock at God's word.

Noah serves as a type, or picture of the rapture. For the times in which they lived this doctrine was not the important thing. The emphasis was in proclaiming the Gospel message and taking it to the world. The message was to; "stay strong in the Lord even in the mist of persecution and death." The Rapture would not be in their time, or their church age.

However, the message is for the last of the church age, the Laodicea church age. This last church would be the one to experience the event. Only the Laodicea Church age would know of how two men could stand in Jerusalem and still be seen by the entire world. Only Laodicea could understand flying locust with the power to sting in its tails. Only Laodicea can now understand a statue that can come to life and talk (A.I. Artificial Intelligence). Only the Laodicean church could understand the flying scroll of Ezekiel 25:13-14 that destroys a city in one hour (Rev.18:5-10). The events of the Book of Revelation come alive every night on the evening news. Only Laodicea understands the true sins of the tribulation period (Rev. 9:20-21) and every one of the signs Jesus gave in Matthew 24 are alive and being played out today with frequency and intensity, just as Jesus said.

So it would be to the Laodicean church age that God would **RENEW** the teaching of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Bride of Christ which is the Church. This could explain the fact that beginning in the mid 1800's the teaching was being **REVEALED** / **REVIVED** (not invented). Yes there were hints of the event throughout church history beginning with Enoch and the prophets of old, and many early church leaders.

In, or about the mid 1800's the church was about to enter into its Laodicean age. I believe that time period saw the **AWAKENING** of the pre-Tribulational rapture teaching of the church. Some were already teaching this, but God was now going to bring it out

into the light of main stream doctrine. Some embraced it and others scoffed at such an idea. Remember they did the same to Noah just before the judgment came.

The Lord always gives ample warning before an event of this magnitude happens. Noah had 120 years to preach before the flood waters came. With Lot we see how the people's sin was so great that God took Lot and his family out just hours before judgment fell. Lot's wife is a picture of Christians who love the world and look back, their hearts are more in the world than in Christ.

The parable of the ten virgins tells us that some Christians will not be ready, they too will be left behind, and they will miss the bridegroom. Those who are left behind will have their robes washed clean in the tribulation and then join those who have preceded them.

The rapture is not for those who call themselves Christian, but their hearts are far from Him. The rapture is rather a reward for those who have kept His commandments and love His coming, eagerly awaiting His return, like a bride who waits for her beloved.

I believe that the early preaching (of the 1800's) of the coming of the pre-Tribulational rapture of the church is God's warning (like Noah). The church is being told to "**GET [make yourself] READY.**" This is ordained from God as the church has already entered into its last church age. The last of the messages to the last church is being played out right now before our eyes, for those who are watching. It is this church period which will ultimately see the rapture event which has been longed for by all believers for the last 2000 plus years and foretold for the last 6000 yrs.

WHAT THE LORD TOLD DANIEL

After receiving the prophetic messages that he did and they were all recorded and written for a time of "The End" Daniel the prophet of the lord was told to seal up the book until the "Time of the End." This tells us that the Lord has messages reserved or sealed up till a later time. Then the Lord told Daniel when that time would be.

Daniel 12:4 "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

The entire message of the book of Daniel was to be sealed up (understanding hidden) until the "Time of the end (end of the age)." Then Jesus tells Daniel when that time will be. It would be only the Laodicean church that would understand its meaning, "When many will go back and forth (upon the earth) and knowledge will increase."

THE PROGRESSION OF KNOWLEDGE

It seems that from the time of Adam to the time of Abraham, knowledge doubled, a period of 2000 years. Then from the time of Abraham to the time of Christ knowledge doubled again, another period of 2000 years. Then from Christ to the year 1750 knowledge doubled again. From 1750 to 1950 knowledge doubled again and from 1950 to 1960 knowledge has once again doubled. Since 1960 man's knowledge has doubled every 22 months and continues to do so. It takes 20 miles of bookshelves to hold what is written every 22 months.



#3 The Picture of the **Jewish Wedding Ceremony** – A Christian Love Story

Jesus was Jewish and He did things like a Jew. So often, if we look at Jewish laws and customs of Jesus' day, we find many of the motivations and reasons for the actions of the Lord. In this section we will be considering those Jewish customs pertaining to matrimony. After all you are the bride of Christ ... this pertains to you.

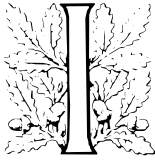
I will not be reading the entire narrative to you, but I will only point out and highlights certain events along the way in Jesus' life where He "symbolically" was doing that which a young Jewish man would do to acquire a bride. The full story is in the back page 90 as taught to us by **Zola Levitt and called "A CHRISTIAN LOVE STORY"**

To acquire a bride:


When a young Jewish man sets out to find for himself a companion his trust is in God that He would lead him to find the right partner for them. As Abraham's servant did when finding a wife (Rebekah) for Isaac (Gen. 24) so the Spirit of God does for us.

- Luke 19:10, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

I N T R O D U C T I O N



In the beginning I started out just trying to teach the subject of the Rapture of the Bride of Christ since it is considered a major doctrine of the church. As I have experienced it, I believe the Holy Spirit uses every opportunity to also teach the teacher. To tell you the truth I never felt satisfied with what I understood about the topic, I just felt there was more and I needed to find it. A never ending challenge of Bible study and going through material wherever I could find it. I searched out the answer, all in an effort to satisfy an inner need to know more.

One day I was given a small booklet by a man, by the name of **Zola Levitt**. What a blessing small booklets can be, for within it I found a lot of truth I really needed to hear. To say the least my eyes were opened to what I already knew ... except on a deeper level. I will be sharing some of these truths in this study and they will be marked by the Jewish star , to show the roots of the teaching I have found. Now I am eager to share with you a more accurate, but deeper understanding of what the Rapture of the Bride (Who is the Church) is really all about. I hope that you will begin to see the total picture of the events leading up to the Bridegroom's coming for His Bride; it really is a **“Christian Love Story”**⁴ formed before the foundations of the world.

I believe that to have a proper understanding of anything there must be a foundation laid first. So let's start building our foundation ... let's start knocking on heaven's door and see what blessings we can find.



First, let's talk about what the Rapture of the Bride is not; it is not the 2nd **RETURN** (advent) of Jesus Christ in all His glory to fight the Battle of Armageddon, and to set up His Millennial Kingdom. Think of it more like a meeting, as the song goes, there's going to be a meeting in the air," ... in the clouds! He is **COMING** back for what is His, there is still unfinished business concerning her. All His attention is now turned towards the one He loves, what a beautiful bride she is, dressed in all of His glory she will shine as bright as He.

⁴ Reference this WEB site at. <https://store.levitt.com/CLS> and the material found there.

The promise: 1 Thess. 4:17 (NASB), “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

The Fulfillment: John 14:2-3, “... 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 you may be also.”

In this we find the fulfillment of the promise of the Bridegroom to His bride. In this we see His “**COMING**,” because (according to His promise) He takes His bride back to heaven with Him. He will have His time with His bride, seven years to be exact. The Bride of Christ hangs all her hope and future plans on the one she loves, yes He has not forgotten you and He is coming, He is coming very soon for there will be a meeting in the clouds. This is your promise.

When we speak about the Rapture of the Bride of Christ, we begin with the promise that Jesus made to her, that indeed He is coming back to receive her unto Himself. Until the fulfillment of that promise she waits for Him, she longs to see the face of her Bridegroom who paid such a high price (The Bride Price) for her.

Jesus did everything a young Jewish man would do in order to acquire a bride. There was a marriage contract presented which she accepted; the bride price was offered up and the payment was executed and she accepted; a cup of acceptance was set before her and she drank from it. After He paid the ultimate price for her, He went back to His Father’s house to prepare a place for her; so that where He is there she will be also.

Now there is but only one more thing the Bridegroom has to do ... “we are listening Lord for the sound of Your trumpet that will call us up to meet you in the air.”

And that is the subject of this study. Now let’s go back to where it started, with Jesus. He came to seek and to save the lost. There are those of us who have been found, we belong to Him, we drank from His cup, contract sealed, we are the BRIDE.

Yeshua Jesus the Bridegroom

Takes the First Step

Acquiring a Bride



The Bride of Jesus Christ

Many Christians today believe incorrectly that after Jesus went through all that He did to acquire a bride, and after going back to His Father's house to prepare a place for His bride, that He would leave her on this earth to suffer and experience unbelievable torture and death at the hands of His enemy Satan. Ask yourself, what kind of a bridegroom does that?

The bride has already accepted Him and her Lord and Savior, she trust in Him with all her heart, her very life is all about the bridegroom. So what does Jesus expect out of His bride that she hasn't already done? She has already repented of her sin and has a relationship with Him already. Can she repent even more? Can she receive more grace or a greater grace through suffering? To all these questions the answer is NO!

The only thing the bride of Christ can do outside of her witness and her testimony is to wait on the Lord, for He will come at an hour she does not know ... or does she?



Let's look at what Jesus did said:

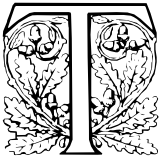
Matthew 24:36 (NASB), "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Mark 13: 28- 30 (NASB), "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Jesus and Paul are in complete agreement on this. We will not know the "day and the hour"—the exact moment of the Lord's Return—but we can know and recognize the "times and the seasons" that lead up to that moment. They both say that the unbelieving world around us will be taken by surprise, but we who believe will see the great Day coming and be ready for it. If we stay awake and keep our (spiritual) eyes open!

part 2





he church is referred to as “The Bride of Christ” for good reason. For those who have accepted the covenant relationship with Jesus are the same ones who have drunk from the cup with Him. He paid the “Bride Price” for those who will drink from His cup. Therefore, we are the ones to whom He said, *“I go to prepare a place for you,”* and we are the ones who now wait for His sudden return, we are the Bride of Christ.



THE COVENANT

(Based on Grace)

So you might be wondering what was the covenant that was made? First let’s look at what God revealed to the prophet Jeremiah. This is the prophecy of the coming of a new covenant with His people, but it is continued to all of those who are spiritual seed of Abraham and follow the Jewish Messiah.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NASB), ³¹“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” ³⁴They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Paul repeats the same covenant promise in Hebrews 8:8-12, for the benefit of the bride. There is yet another scripture I would like to point out to you contained in the New Testament recorded for us by the Apostle John.

The story is of a man named Nicodemus (John 3:3-18) who comes to Jesus by night to ask the Rabbi a very personal question. He begins declaring much the same thing the thief on the cross did, *“we know you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”*

I believe Jesus knew the intention of his heart because He didn’t ask the man ... “What do you want to know?” Jesus already knew and so he answers the intent of his

question, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

Like Nicodemus many of us wonder ... “How can I be born again?”

Jesus is about to answer everyone’s question just a few verses down to which John records His words.

John 3:15-16 (NASB), ¹⁴“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He **gave His** only begotten **Son**, that **whoever believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

We can see very plainly that these verses **CONSTITUTE** a **CONTRACT**. Terms are given and the parties identified. Each party of the contract has a part in it. God’s part is stated, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.*” This also agrees with the very first word in the Bible, it is found in the Jewish word “*Beresheeth.*” In the six letter pictogramation of the word which states, “*The Son of God shall be destroyed by His own hand upon a cross.*”

There is a second part, which is for the “**whoever believes**,” What is our part in the covenant, it can be found in the second half of the verse and in the words Jesus told to Nicodemus, “**believe in Him.**” Then Jesus tells us of the reward His Father has for “whosoever believes,” the reward that is planned for you ... “**He shall not perish, but have eternal life.**” Terms are given and parties are identified this equals a contractual agreement, a covenant.



A Deeper look at the *Contract of Marriage*

To illustrate the meaning of the contract that was agreed to let’s look back on the very first practical experience of grace by which we entered into this contract with the Lord.

Barabbas was a robber, who had been convicted of insurrection and murder and had been condemned to die.⁵ It was the Feast of Passover (at which time it is customary to set free some notable criminal).

⁵ John 18:39-40, Matthew 15:6-15

Pilate gave the Jews the choice between Jesus and Barabbas. They chose Barabbas. Jesus was then turned over to the officers of the law for crucifixion. His death then was a **SUBSTITUTE** for Barabbas. Jesus satisfied the law and Barabbas was freed. If Barabbas, after having been set free, had gone to Calvary to witness the crucifixion, he would have seen who had taken his place on the center cross. Barabbas would have come to realize five things:

1. That he was a **JUSTLY CONDEMNED SINNER**.
2. That Jesus was an **INNOCENT SUFFERER**.
3. That an “innocent sufferer” had taken **HIS PLACE**.
4. That he had **DONE NOTHING TO MERIT THAT SUBSTITUTION**.
5. That Christ’s substitution for him **SATISFIED THE LAW**.

If Barabbas had gone to Calvary to witness the crucifixion, someone might have recognized him and might have pointed him out to the Centurion as an escaped convict. However, Barabbas was the first person who could point to Jesus hanging on the cross and declare “that man took my place on the cross and his death, not mine, satisfies the law for me.” The Centurion would have to say, “You are free to go.” If Jesus had not hung on the cross for Barabbas, then Barabbas would have been on the cross satisfying the law for his own crimes.

Now, our position is the same as Barabbas’. The man Jesus, the Son of God, took our place, freeing us from the penalty of the law, freeing us from our sins, freeing us from our transgressions and those to come. He took our trials and tribulations past, present and future) upon Himself on the cross, and then died for them. If you are tied and weary, believe me Jesus knows and He understands. He holds out His hand that you might trust Him more. He makes you a promise ... to give you rest:

Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB), ²⁸“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

The penalty of “Spiritual Death” was paid when Jesus cried, “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*” And the penalty of “Physical Death” when He cried “*it is finished*” and yielded up the Ghost. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about this moment.

Isaiah 53:5 (KJV), “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

It follows **reason then, if our iniquities ARE UPON HIM, then they are NOT UPON US!** You are now made clean, sanctified, and righteous by your Bridegroom, you are the Bride.

This is the miracle Jesus brings, but at first people questioned Him, it is hard now and it was hard then, to understand how a man can be **BORN AGAIN**. Here is the mystery of the **Gospel of Salvation** and the message of the New Testament. Jesus tells us how it is possible.

John 3:5-7, “... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

We are not told how Nicodemus responded to Jesus.

You must be “Born Again,” and with that your name is written down in glory, in the books of Heaven, in the Book of Life and you are counted among those who are the **BRIDE**, all because you simply believed that Jesus is who He said He was, the Son of God. For all practical purposes, as part of the Jewish matrimonial process, you are now betrothed to Jesus in the eyes of God. Jesus has become your **Bridegroom** and you belong to Him now, for you are the **Bride of Christ**.

A Promise from the Bridegroom, to the Bride.

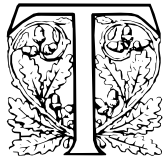
John 14:1-3, “... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

With these words Jesus has promised to come back and get His bride. The receiving / getting will be in the clouds... and I asked the Lord, “Where are we going Jesus?” He answered me, “To My Father’s house, where you will forever be with Me.”



The Jewish Wedding⁶ and That Which Pertains to the Church

(A Christian Love Story)⁷



he Ancient Hebrew Wedding Tradition is for those who are truly born again. It contains a picture of the coming of our Bridegroom as He promised He would.

Matthew 25:6 “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ”

In the phrase “Come out to meet Him,” we see a picture of the rapture of the bride.

One of the most beautiful pictures of God’s love is that of the ancient Hebrew wedding. It consisted of three phases: the **BETROTHAL** phase, the **WEDDING** phase and the **CELEBRATION** phase.



The Betrothal Phase

and the Marriage Covenant

When God revealed Himself to the Jews, He gave them specific instructions for marriage in order to sanctify it properly as the basic unit of society. God’s instructions for marriage required the man to actually “acquire” a wife publicly in the presence of witnesses. This formal process would give sanctity and permanence to the relationship.



⁶ Taken in part from the booklet by Richard Booker, “Here Comes the Bride”

⁷ Taken in part from Zola Levitt’s, “A Christian Love Story”



Acquiring a Bride:

When a young Jewish man “sets his eyes” on a young Jewish woman he asks for her hand in marriage by means of a marriage contract. The marriage contract was actually a covenant⁸ and in ancient times a covenant was considered to be a legal binding agreement between parties.

The “**BRIDE PRICE**” actually had some useful purposes. First of all, if the bridegroom was willing to sacrifice hard cash for his bride, he was showing his love in a most tangible way. Second, it was a favor to his future father-in-law. We must remember that in those days of farming and heavy labor, it was something of a liability to raise a daughter. A family of sons would prosper more because of the built-in work force; but a family with daughters would expect to “consolidate their losses” when the girls were mature enough to attract bridegrooms. And so the father of the bride was more or less paid off for his earlier expenses and for his patience and skill in raising a girl to be good marriage material.

The bridegroom would present himself to the bride with this agreement, offering to pay a suitable price for her, and she and her father would consider this contract. If the terms were suitable, the bride and the groom would drink a cup of wine together and this would seal the bargain. This cup was most significant. It signified the bridegroom’s willingness to sacrifice in order to have this bride. It was offered as a toast to the bride, and of course, it showed the bride’s willingness to enter into this marriage.

Then the groom would pay the price. It should be said that this price was no modest token, but was set so that the new bride would be a costly item, which was the idea. The young man had no delusions that he was getting something for nothing. He would pay dearly to marry the girl of his choice.



New Testament Parallel:



1 John 4:19, “We love him, because he first loved us.”

Luke 19:10, “For the son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost,”

⁸ Covenant is “*brit*” in Hebrew



*Bound by Covenant:*⁹

The covenant is the closest, most enduring, and most sacred of all contracts. It is binding on both individuals and it is absolutely indissoluble and cannot be broken under any circumstance. To enter into a blood covenant with someone means that you give them your life, love and protection forever, till death takes you.

In Biblical thinking, "Covenant" is a very sacred word; yet in western thinking, it has a very casual concept. Because of this, western ideas of a covenant are more like a contract or legal agreement, both giving the idea that it can be ended or walked away from, and can be limited by time. Jewish belief of a covenant carries more of an eternal quality never to be broken, and could last until the third and fourth generation of descendants.

There were nine steps in the scripture that was required for a man to make a covenant with someone else that would stand the test of time and one that would never be broken. A better term for this would be “**CUT**” in other words to “Cut Covenant,” with someone else. The act of cutting would leave a permanent **SCAR** showing this person was in covenant with someone else. It also meant the two were in a covenant relationship, so that if one of them was in trouble the other would come, if you wanted to fight one you would have to fight the other, if one were hungry and had no food, he could go to his covenant partners house and it was always open to him, all that one had also belonged to the other, such was the strength and power of the covenant.

The nine steps of the covenant were fulfilled by Jesus during His lifetime. This is not a comprehensive study but we will take a quick look at the steps here. Know that Jesus did all these steps for you. A few of them may seem not very eventful to you, but all of them are powerful and the depth of their meaning is considered by the Rabbis for many years.

⁹ Excerpts from “The Scarlet Thread by: Dr. Richard Booker

Nine Steps to¹⁰ Cut Covenant

1. Sharing of a Coat or Robe:



An Old Testament example of this can be found in 1 Samuel 18:3-4. The story of Jonathan and David making a covenant. The garment they shared with each other represented Jonathan's position of royalty.

- Jonathan was the crown prince, son of King Saul, destined for the throne.
- From birth he had been trained, schooled, and groomed for Kingship.
- He had everything to live for, possessions beyond our imagination, money, prestige, and a future to be envied.

✚ New Covenant Reality: Is that by contrast Jesus by leaving His home in Heaven came to earth and took on the robe of a suffering servant. By giving us His coat of righteousness, He is saying: "I'm giving you my life; all that I am and all that I have."

2. Take off the Belt:



Back to our Old Testament example in 1 Samuel 18 we find Jonathan gave David more than just his robe, but he gave David his belt. This is not the belt that holds up your pants, but rather the belt that carried all your weapons to protect yourself. Symbolically, giving each other your strength and the pledge of your support and protection. You are saying, here is my ability to fight. If someone attacks you, they are also attacking me. Your battles are my battles and mine are yours.

1 Samuel 18:4, "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."

✚ New Testament Reality: is that Jesus also gave all and surrendered his ability to defend himself by not calling the angels to come and stop his pain and suffering. As

¹⁰ Taken in part from the book "The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread," by: Dr. Richard Booker

He hung on the cross everyone forsook Him and fled. As His death shows us and is a lesson to never be forgotten by us, is that **a covenant partner does not depend upon the faithfulness of the other person**. Jesus gave all He had.

This was what Yeshua had in mind when He said:

John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

At the Last Supper when Yeshua was about to Give His Life, He said:

John 15:15, "Henceforth I call you not servants; I have called you friends;"

Biblically, a friend is someone with whom you have a Covenant. Abraham is called the "*Friend of God*" but not until after he had made his covenant with God. In effect, he was saying,

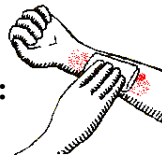
- "I now give to you everything with which I could ever hurt you, and I place myself at your mercy."
- "If I am attacked, unless you defend me, I am defenseless."
- No one came to the defense of Christ on the cross. They all forsook Him and fled.

However, our Covenant Partner, God Himself, is committed to fight our battles, to be our defense, and preserve us to everlasting life.

2 Tim. 2:13, "If we believe not, yet He is still faithful: he cannot deny himself."

3.

Raise the Right arm and Mix the Blood:




In the book of Leviticus it tells us that life is in the blood,¹¹ making this step vitally important. Each partner would raise their right arms and cut their palms and bring them together. As they did, their blood would mingle as they swore allegiance to one another. The symbolism here is:

- As their blood mingled, they committed themselves to the reality that their lives were now one.
- They are putting off their old nature and putting on the nature of the covenant partner. Two lives were becoming one being, the exchange of their very life.

¹¹ Lev. 17:11, 14

- They could not tell where one person's blood ended and the other person's blood began. Their blood, their life had mingled together and became inseparable.
- Their lives could never again be separated any more than you could separate the blood back to its original form.

 New Testament Reality: If you took a few drops of your blood and a few drops of your covenant partner's blood and put it into a little cup, could you ever separate them again? The answer is no. This is what the covenant blood of Yeshua did for us. Yeshua has mingled his blood with ours and we have become one with Christ.

John 6:53-54, "Then Yeshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

This was a hard thing for many who followed Yeshua to comprehend and later in verse 66 we are told "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

Those who accept the covenant that Yeshua offers accepts the blood of Christ also. We are identifying with Christ's suffering and our old nature died on the cross with Christ. Therefore Paul tells us in

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Each time we partake of the Lord's Supper, which is a Covenant Meal, we are reminded of what Christ did for us and the covenant we have with Yeshua.

Luke 22:19 "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

We are to remember our covenant responsibilities that we made with Christ.

- We have been cleansed by the sacred blood of The New Covenant, the perfect Lamb of God.
- As our blood is also mingled with Christ, we have committed ourselves to the reality that our lives are now one.
- We have put off our old nature and put on the nature of our covenant partner, two lives becoming one, the exchange of our very lives.

- We cannot tell where one person's blood ended and the other person's blood began. Our blood and our life have mingled together and has become inseparable.
- Our lives could never again be separate, any more than you could ever again separate the blood back, one from the other.
- This Exchange of life is what Calvary is all about.

Heb. 13:5, "... he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Prov. 18:24, "... there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother."

Remember that a covenant does not depend upon the faithfulness of the other person. Those who had walked away from their covenants were known as "covenant breakers."

Romans 1:31 "Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:"

These people could not be trusted, their word meant nothing and they were shunned by the community. Today we still have "covenant breakers," Whether it is their "Marriage Covenant" or the "New Covenant" that Yeshua gave, they chose to walk away and no longer support their part of the covenant. Nobody can break that covenant promise for them, they do it themselves. Again! A covenant does not depend upon the faithfulness of the other person. Many a faithful partner has stayed true to their covenant even though the other partner has not. Grace is also about acceptance for those who have broken covenant. Like the prodigal son who returned home, repented and found that the grace covenant did not depend upon the faithfulness **of the other person.**

4. Exchange Names:

As the blood of the two covenant partners intermingled, they would then exchange names. They would both take the last name of the other as part of their name. We can see an example of this before and after the covenant God made with Abram.

Gen. 11:29 "Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai,"

Notice the pre-covenant names of Abraham and Sarah.

The Covenant:

Gen. 17:1 "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be

blameless. "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."

Sealing of the Covenant:

Gen. 17:5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations."

Genesis 17:15 "Then God said to Abraham, "as for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name."

God used His sacred name "YHVH" in honoring the covenant with Abram and inserted part of His name into theirs, AbraHam and SaraH.

In doing this each had the power and authority of the name of their covenant partner. Today we would call it the "**Power of Attorney**." Each gave to the other the right and authority to use his name as their very own with no restriction or limitation.

In Genesis 17:1 it says that "*the LORD*" appeared to Abram."

The word "**LORD**" is a translation from (4) Hebrew consonants [*Yod-Hei-Vav-Hei*] "YHVH" also "YHWH" which is the sacred name of God and often pronounced **Yahweh**, it is known as the Tetragrammaton.



In 1611 the anti-Semitic King James translators replaced YHVH Yahweh with the designation of "LORD" into the text. In my opinion this is a great loss to the Christian Church.

New Testament Reality:

Acts 1:17 "we are called by His name (*The [Christ] = Christian*), we have been given a Holy name, a name above all names."

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

In the giving of the "**New Covenant**" Yeshua also tells those who have entered into covenant with Him to use His name. You have the "**Power of Attorney**" when you ask in His name.

John 14:13, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

To act in another's name is to do what they would do, think like them and behave like them. This is a covenant privilege we must not take lightly or use flippantly. It is a powerful name even to the "*tearing down of strongholds*," but it is also a sacred trust that we must handle in holiness.

5. Make a Scar

After the blood is mingled and names exchanged, then a scar is made as a lasting reminder of the covenant. The scar also bore witness to others that they had "cut covenant" with another and served as a warning that anyone who dealt with them also dealt with the covenant partner. Generally most would think twice before assaulting a man with the scar of the blood covenant on him and especially if the man had multiple scars on his arm.

- This was to form a scar on the wrist that would never fade away.
- A small cut may heal and vanish away.
- This scar was to serve as a lifelong reminder of the covenant rights and responsibilities to which they had committed themselves.
- It was to remind them of their responsibility.
- It may hurt sometimes to keep the covenant. It may cost you something, your own agenda, time, money, possessions etc.
- The scar took this covenant out of the realm of emotions, feelings and circumstances and into the realm of assurance of a covenant relationship.

New Testament Reality:

Christ received His scars on the cross, one in each wrist, in each foot, and in His side. Christ submitted Himself to be scarred by the shedding of His blood on the cross. This He did for those who would enter into a covenant partnership with Him. As covenant partners with Christ we can point to His scars and know if we are ever in danger

or need help, our covenant partner will be there for us. All we must do is remember the promise of His word.

Heb. 13:5-6.”.. for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what
man shall do unto me.”

After Yeshua had risen from the tomb, many saw Him and believed but there was one, Thomas, who would not believe until He saw the scars in Yeshua’s hand and side. John Chapter 20 tells us that after eight days Yeshua came into the room (the door was closed) and appeared to the disciples. Yeshua especially went to Thomas and not only showed him His scars but asked him to put his hand into the wound. This certainly would remove all doubt.

John 20:26-27 “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Yeshua came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace to you! Then He said to Thomas, Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

It should be pointed out that Yeshua still had His covenant scars after His resurrection. He carried the scars with Him to heaven. Can it be that all who have been wounded and left scarred for the testimony of Yeshua Jesus carry their scars into eternity as badges of honor? They were found worthy to suffer for Christ and now identify with Him on a closer and more personal level. As covenant partners, we should expect to share in the suffering of Christ because they first hated Him. As His servants we can expect the same from the world.

James 1:2 “We should count it all joy when we fall into various trials.”

6.

Covenant Terms:



Every contract, promise, agreement and covenant has its terms. Before witnesses, each covenant partner would say: “All my assets are yours. All my money, all my property and possessions are yours. If you need them, you do not even have to ask. “In the same manner this would include all their liabilities, each other’s liability would be the liability of the covenant partner also. They would also vow responsibility for the care and support of the other’s family in the event of their death.

New Testament Reality:

When Yeshua cut covenant with us, we received all of His assets and He took all our liabilities.

His Assets:

Ephesians 1:18 “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints”,

Coloss. 3:24 “knowing that from the Lord you will receive the **reward of the inheritance**; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

Hebrews 9:15 “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the **eternal inheritance**.”

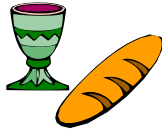
1 Peter 1:4 “to an **inheritance** incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you”,

Our liabilities

Isaiah 53:5 “But He was wounded for **our transgressions**, He was bruised for **our iniquities**; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”


7.

Eat a Memorial Meal:



Sometimes in place of the animal and blood, bread and wine was used. In the scriptures, wine is called the blood of the grapes¹² and it represents the blood. The bread signifies the body. The two men would break the bread and feed it to each other saying, "This is symbolic of my body and I am now putting it in you." Then they would serve each other the wine and say, "This is symbolic of my life's blood which is now your blood. We are now one together with a new nature."

- This was done to celebrate the birth of something new, a new relationship, a wedding, etc.

 New Testament Reality: (As Prophesied by Jeremiah¹³)

The Apostle Paul gave us direction and a warning about entering into the New Covenant.

1 Cor. 11:28-29, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Here Paul gives us direction and a warning of living under the covenant. Why would Paul tell us these things?

Eph. 5:23, "... Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body."

Col. 1:18, " And he is the head of the body, the church:"

Remember that Christ wants us to have a covenant relationship with Him. He is in us and we are in Him. When things are not right between members of the body, then we are not walking in covenant relationship and we need to settle issues that divide us, before Satan uses them to divide and destroy the body.

The Memorial Meal serves to bind us in a covenant relationship with Christ and one another and should not to be taken lightly. This meal acts as a reminder of the covenant relationship we have with Christ and every other Christian that is part of the Body of Christ. We violate what this meal represents when we participate in it having

¹² Gen. 49:11

¹³ Jer. 31:31-37

unresolved issues in our life. The breaking of the bread with a covenant partner symbolizes two lives permanently intertwined together.

8.

Cut the Covenant



This literally means what it implies, “**cut the covenant.**” An animal was taken and split down the middle, two separate bloody halves. The halves are then laid to the side as each person would stand between the halves, back to back. They would then walk through the halves and around them making a figure eight and end up back facing each other. The symbolism here is that they were saying two things.

1. They are dying to themselves, giving up their rights to their own life for a new walk with their covenant partner unto death. Each half of the animal represents each covenant partner.
2. Since the blood covenant is the most solemn pact, each partner would point down to the bloody animal halves and say, “God do to me and more if I ever try to break this covenant. Feed me to the vultures because I tried to break the most sacred of all covenants.” The number eight has since been known as the number or symbol for new beginnings

Symbolically, what is being said at this point is, "At any time you need me, the rest of the world stops. You are my first priority."

New Testament Reality

At the cross Yeshua, the Son of God shed His blood and by doing so sealed the new covenant that He made with us. In this we see Jesus paying the “Bride Price” for us. By doing so He:

- Died to Himself so that He may do the will of His Father who sent Him.
- Became our advocate to the Father on our behalf

9.

Plant a Memorial:



The two blood covenant partners would plant a tree, and sprinkle blood from the animal over the tree. This tree and the scar from cutting themselves would serve as a memorial to the covenant that they entered into.

A tree is a symbol of life as it was in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:9 "...The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

- God's Word is referred to as a Tree of Life (Prov. 3:18)
- Fulfilled Desires are referred to as a Tree of Life (Prov. 13:12)



The Covenant of Marriage:

Now that we understand what Jesus did for us to seal the covenant of Grace, of love and of marriage for us, we come to the event its self. The marriage covenant is a blood covenant; it is a sacred agreement between a man and a woman by which they pledge their love and their lives to one another before their family and friends and before God. It will be the wedding night when that covenant is sealed by blood. When God spoke of His relationship to the Jewish people He did so in terms of a blood covenant. He "**ACQUIRED**" them for Himself through the marriage covenant.

Psalm 50:5, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."



New Testament Parallel:



Ephesians 1:5-7, "... In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace";

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.."



The Cup of Acceptance:

It is stipulated within the marriage contract (Ketubah) the exact details of the marriage (a special type of Jewish prenuptial agreement). The ketubah is gone over many times and examined by the fathers of both parties. Within the ketubah many things are spelled out and negotiated such as the husband's responsibility for providing his wife with food, clothing, shelter and conjugal rights.¹⁴



Once all has been agreed upon and accepted by the fathers the young man would pour a cup of wine for his beloved and nervously waits to see if she will drink it. It is his way of finally “popping the question” to her. If she drinks the cup of wine it is her way of saying “yes” and shows her acceptance of his marriage proposal ... hence the name “**CUP of ACCEPTANCE.**”



New Testament Parallel:



The New Testament Christian accepts Christ as their Savior and their names written in the Book of Life. In reality we have said yes to the marriage proposal and like the ancient Jewish bride who waits for her love to return, we too wait. Until then we practice part of the covenant making process. We renew our vows to the Lord through the Cup of Acceptance we call the Communion Cup. In this way we remember our Lord the Bride Groom until He returns.



Matthew 26:27-29, ²⁷“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹ But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

Note: His blood was shed (poured out) **FOR OUR SINS**; it was not for our drinking. The blood was given to **PURIFY** us before God. His blood in exchange for our life, this

¹⁴ Ex. 21:10

makes purification possible. This thing we do in our **REMEMBERING** of Him and the covenant He was making with us. Until His return Jesus asked His disciples to remember Him. The cup and the bread is for the remembering of the bridegroom until He comes for us

Remember Me



Leviticus 17:10-12 (NASB), ¹⁰“And if any native Israelite or foreigner living among you eats or drinks blood in any form, I will turn against that person and cut him off from the community of your people, ¹¹for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible. ¹²That is why I have said to the people of Israel, ‘You must never eat or drink blood—neither you nor the foreigners living among you.’”

At this point the young man begins the process of preparing a place for his young bride and himself. As he leaves she in turn takes a special bath as part of a ceremonial cleansing to prepare her for the days ahead. The Hebrew word for this is “*Mikveh*.” It is a washing or cleansing that denotes a **PURIFYING** through **BAPTISM**. At this point the young couple is betrothed to one another (husband/wife-to-be, fiancée) and not yet ready or able to live together as husband and wife. In the Western world this called the engagement period.

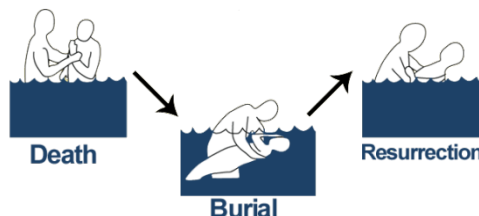


New Testament Parallel:



Matthew 3:13-17, ¹³“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? ¹⁵Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. ¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and landing on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Note: The New Testament practice of Baptism after salvation is the same as the Hebrew bride who purifies herself through the washing and a special bath which is a type of baptism. This is seen as making herself ready for the coming of her bridegroom ... Have you made yourself ready?



We remember our covenant commitments to Christ every time we celebrate the communion. Do it in remembrance of Him. In Baptism we find a bride making herself ready, she identifies with the Bridegroom.



A Time of Separation:



After the young woman drinks from the Cup of Acceptance the young man will then announces to her that he is “going to prepare a **PLACE for HER**,” and as soon as he is finished he will come for her, until then she will not see him again. Before he leaves he gives her *gifts* as tokens of his love and a constant reminder to the bride that she is his special treasure. This long period of separation will be hard, but well worth the wait.



New Testament Parallel:



The gifts the bridegroom gives, when applied to the life of the believer can be seen as their fruit. The gifts speak of the bridegroom’s nature in us.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”



The bridegroom returns home to **HIS FATHER’S HOUSE** to start working on a place for the two of them. The young bridegroom would be eager to finish quickly after all this could take up to a year to complete. The young man is often tempted to cut corners, so it was up to his father to determine the exact time when the young man was finished and time to go get his bride.



New Testament Parallel:



(The promise that He will come back for her.)

John 14:1-3, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

But the fruit
of the spirit is
love
JOY-PEACE
PATIENCE
kindness
GOODNESS
FAITHFULNESS
gentleness
& SELF
CONTROL
Galatians 5:22-23

This is one promise you can take to the bank ... Jesus is coming back for His bride!



Making Herself Ready:



The bride, for her part, was obligated to do a lot of waiting. She would take the time to gather her trousseau and be ready when her bridegroom came. Custom provided that she had to have an oil lamp ready in case he came late at night in the darkness. She had to be ready to travel at a moment's notice. During this long period of waiting she was referred to as **"consecrated," "set apart," "bought with a price."** She was truly a lady-in-waiting, but there was no doubt that her bridegroom would return. Sometimes a young man would depart for a very long time indeed, but of course he had paid a high price for his bride; even though there were other young women available, he would surely return to the one with whom he had made a covenant.

As the year went on, the bride would assemble her sisters and bridesmaids and whoever would go with her to the wedding when the bride groom came, and they would each have their oil lamps ready. They would wait at her house every night on the chance that the groom would come, along with his groomsmen, and sweep them all away to a joyous and sudden wedding ceremony. (Ref. The parable of the ten virgins Mt.25:1-13)

Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

In Romans 12 we find Paul telling us how to make ourselves ready. Some of us have much to resolve in order to make ourselves ready. Prayer and forgiveness goes a long way. Forgiveness covers a multitude of sins.

While the bridegroom is gone the bride is busy **PREPARING** herself. She uses the gifts he left her to make herself beautiful for the benefit of her beloved. Although she doesn't know when he is coming back for her, she wants to look her best. She **REORDERS HER** entire **LIFE** to make herself ready for his coming. This anticipation becomes her focus, her every thought is in waiting for the day when she will **SEE HIM FACE to FACE**. ... Make yourself ready!



New Testament Parallel:



1 Corinthians 13:12, ¹²“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 John 3:2, ²“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”



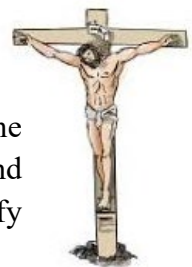
When the bride leaves her house she wears a veil to let other men know she is “**SPOKEN FOR**.” That she is no longer available because she has been **BOUGHT WITH a PRICE**. She is set apart and consecrated to her bridegroom. She will **RESIST** any other offers as she waits for her one true love who has bought and paid for her (the bride price) she is his and his alone. She can now be called a *me'kudeshet*, meaning one who is betrothed, sanctified, dedicated to another.



New Testament Parallel: The bride Price.



1 Corinthians 6:19-20, ¹⁹“What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?²⁰ For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.



Jesus paid the Bride Price and we belong to Him.



✧ Meanwhile, the bridegroom would be building and decorating with all that he had. His father would inspect the chamber from time to time to see if it were ready. If you were to come along the road at this point and saw the young man working on his bridal chamber, you might ask him, “When’s the big day?” But the bridegroom would answer, “**Only my father knows that.**”

part 3

It's all about a Wedding



The Wedding Phase

It's time to get your Bride! ☆



At the right time the father tells his son the bridegroom it is time to go get your bride. The young man wastes no time hurrying back to his bride who is still waiting for him. Sometimes the bridegroom would come in like a thief in the night and “**STEAL AWAY**” his bride and take her with Him. It is exciting and romantic for the bride as she waits for her betrothed to come and steal her away, never knowing when he will come for her and take her back home with him.

If the bridegroom came for the bride in the middle of the night then the bride made special preparations for his coming so she could leave on a moment's notice. It was the custom for the bride to keep an oil lamp beside her bed as well as her other belongings. Her bridesmaids are also waiting making sure their lamps have plenty of oil in them. (Reference the parable of the ten virgins Matthew 25:1-13.)



Coming for the Bride:

“Son ... go get your bride.”



When the father tells the bridegroom that it is time to go get his bride he gathers his friends and eagerly starts out to get his bride. When he gets close to the bride's house a shout is given and the **BLOWING** of the **SHOFAR** (rams horn) to let the bride know her bridegroom is coming.



New Testament Parallel:



1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, ¹⁶“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

He Came Back for Me

It has been over two thousand years since Jesus made His Bride a promise to come back and get her. He has not forgotten her, or His promise to her. Throughout the centuries she has waited to hear the sound of His trumpet telling her that He is close, even at her door. All her hopes and dreams find their fulfillment in Him and soon she will see Him face to face. She looks forward to her time alone with Him.

Rest assured all you Bride of Christ; your Bridegroom is coming for you and with your mouth you will confess the hopes and dreams of your heart ... “He came back for me!”

Understand this ... Jesus looks forward to that Wedding Day as much if not more than you.



Soon the bridegroom and his friends charge right into the house and *carry off the bride* and her bridesmaid's. The bride has her veil on and as the group makes their way through the streets the noise awakens the people around. The people look out the windows to see who is getting married, but the bride's face is covered and so they don't know who is being carried away, but they knew she will be back in a week and then they shall know. Some will be surprised, but others will have guessed it all along.



New Testament Parallel:



Matthew 24:36-45, ³⁶“But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one

shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

The Wedding:



New Testament Parallel:

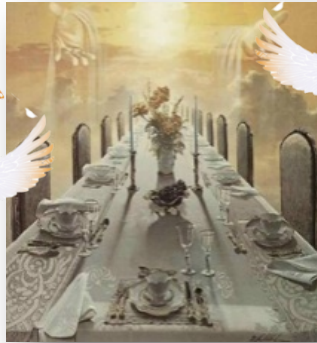


Revelation 19:7-9, ⁷“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” ⁸It was given to her to cloth herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen are the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”



The Celebration Phase

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb



The Celebration Phase:



When the bridegroom and the bride get back home and make their appearance the guest clap and cheer and congratulate them. There is a lot of singing and dancing and is a very festive time. After all the singing and dancing there is a joyous feast called the **MARRIAGE SUPPER** which is to honor the new husband and wife.



New Testament Parallel:



Revelation 19:9, ⁹“And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, these are the true sayings of God.

When the party is over, the bride and groom depart for their own house where they will live together (This is the millennial reign of Christ on earth). Now that the bride is married she no longer wears her veil. As the couple makes their way back through the streets they had been on just seven days earlier, the neighbors can now see the identity of the bride. They too rejoice and celebrate the marriage covenant that God has established in the young couple's lives.



New Testament Parallel:



1 Thessalonians 3:13, ¹³“To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”



HOME

Revelation 21:9-11, (NASB) “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God.”

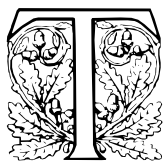
part 4



ESCHATOLOGY

The Study of *end-time* events

The Doctrine of the “*Rapture*”
of the Bride of Christ



he word “**RAPTURE**” as we will be using it here, means “the joyous act of being transported, caught away or caught up from one place to another place.” Although this word itself is not found in the Bible, the joyous hope of believers in the Lord Jesus being transported from earth to heaven is described for us in scripture. In fact, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the words “*caught up*” are used to speak of that time when all believers shall be taken home to heaven. This joyous moment has also been called “the Lord’s coming for His people” but more often it is simply called the “Rapture.”



The Jewish Connection

Two Pictures of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture



The Meeting in the Clouds

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB), ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

FIRST PICTURE

of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture

This picture can be found in the Feast of Israel¹⁵

Leviticus 23:4 (NASB), “These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them.”



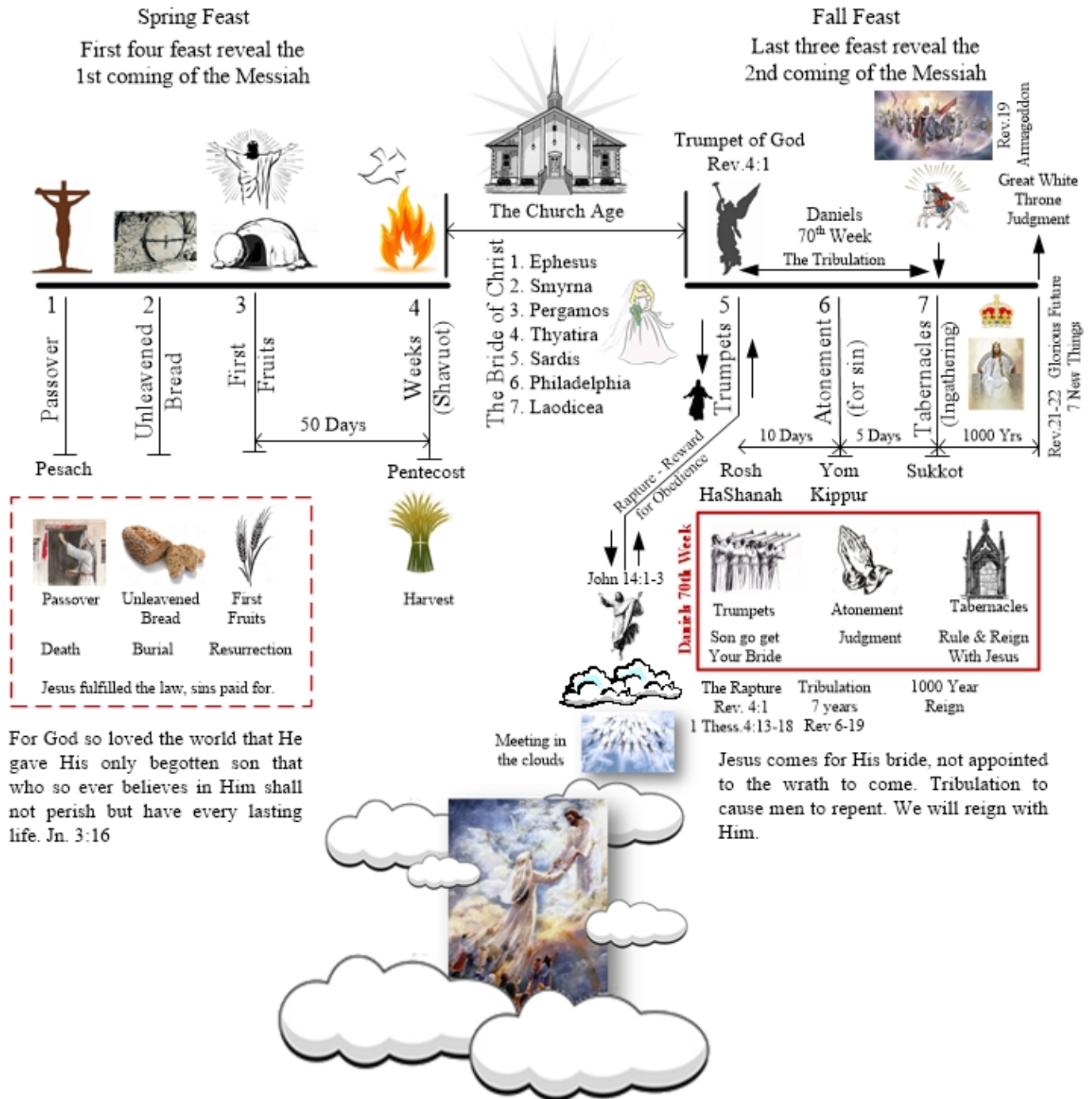
he word “feasts” is the Hebrew word *mow’ed* (*mo-ade, moadim*) meaning: “to keep an appointment” or “appointed times.” The phrase “holy convocation” means “rehearsal.” In other words, the feasts of the Lord were appointed times of worship for Israel that would serve as “dress rehearsals” in God’s prophetic calendar.

These feasts are not just part of the heritage of Israel; there is something much deeper going on here. Fundamentally, these seven feasts represent and typify the sequence, timing, and significance of the major events of the Lord’s redemptive plan. They commence at Calvary, where Jesus voluntarily gave Himself for the sins of the world (Passover), and climax at the consummation of the Messianic Kingdom at the Lord’s second coming. These seven feasts depict the entire redemptive plan of the Messiah. They are divided into two parts the spring feasts and the fall feasts.

¹⁵ <http://jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/FeastOfTrumpets.htm>

The Seven Feast of Israel

Revealing God's Redemptive
Plan for Mankind



Part 4 – Eschatology, The study of *End-Time* Events
The Doctrine of the “Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Bride of Christ

Part 4 – Eschatology, The study of *End-Time* Events
The Doctrine of the “Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Bride of Christ



et's start tying all this together now. After all the teaching we have uncovered, how can we ever again look at the doctrine of the Rapture and not see the Jewish Matrimonial Wedding process being played out.

We have already seen about how Jesus Christ the Son of God took steps to acquire for Himself a Bride. How He with His Father, presented the bridal contract (Jn. 3:16) to the “*whosoever will believe in Him ...*” and accept His proposal of eternal life and drink from the cup of acceptance. To those who will drink will have everlasting life in Christ.

We see a picture of the Bridegroom paying the price for His beloved in the **Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread** (*crucifixion and burial*); He paid the price for her sins. He then went away to prepare a place for her (Jn.14:1-3), that where He is there she may be also. This is seen in the **Feast of First Fruits**, but there is more to that story in the last three feasts.

The first four Feasts of Israel are the Spring Feast (Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits). Jesus literally fulfilled these during the Passover week, and then 50 days later came the promise of the Holy Spirit on **Pentecost**. The Holy Spirit of God was poured out on all who were gathered together on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), and with it came the beginning of the **CHURCH AGE**.

The next prophetic event on Gods calendar we find a picture for the Rapture of His Bride in the (*Feasts of Trumpets*). When the Lord fulfills the promise (Jn.14:1-3) made to the bride, and comes back for her. He will turn his attention back to His people Israel of which Daniel 9:27 deals with. All of God's dealing with man has been according to His timetable.

If the first four feast reveal Christ first coming in which Jesus showed us the way to God the Father. What can be revealed about the last three feast of Israel? It is to this question that we will be focusing on now.

THE FALL FEAST

The 5th Feast:



Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah* – September 30th)

September 30th is Rosh Hashanah (it actually begins on the 29th at sundown). **ROSH HASHANAH** means the “Head of the year” and thus the holiday is referred to as the Jewish New Year. However, in the Bible it is known as “the **FEAST OF TRUMPETS**.” This is the only Feast of the seven that there was a 48 hour window to begin, because they did not know the day or the hour until it was upon them (Matthew 24:36).



The bride, for her part, was obligated to do a lot of waiting. She would take the time to gather her trousseau and be ready when her bridegroom came. Custom provided that she had to have an oil lamp ready in case he came late at night in the darkness. She had to be ready to travel at a moment’s notice. During this long period of waiting she was referred to as “consecrated,” “set apart,” “bought with a price.” She was truly a lady-in-waiting, but there was no doubt that her bridegroom would return. Sometimes a young man would depart for a very long time indeed, but of course he had paid a high price for his bride; he would surely return to the one with whom he had made a covenant.

As the year went on, the bride would assemble her sisters and bridesmaids and whoever would go with her to the wedding when the bride groom came, and they would each have their oil lamps ready. They would wait at her house every night on the chance that the groom would come, along with his groomsmen, and sweep them all away to a joyous and sudden wedding ceremony. For they did not know the day or the hour the bridegroom would come for them. ...

Finally, the chamber would be ready and the groom would assemble his young friends to accompany him on the exciting trip to claim his bride. The big moment had arrived and the bridegroom was more than ready. He

and his young men would sit out in the night, making every attempt to completely surprise the bride.

And that’s the romantic part. All the Jewish brides were “stolen.” And the Jews had a special understanding of a woman’s heart. What a thrill to her, to be “abducted” and carried off into the night, not by a stranger, but by the one who loved her so much that he had paid a high price for her.

Over at the bride’s house, things had to be ready, because the bride would be surprised since her bridegroom would try to come at midnight while she was sleeping. But the oil lamps were ready and the bride had her veil. And while she might be sleeping in her wedding dress, she was definitely surprised. It’s a wonder she would sleep at all as the year went on!

Now there were rules to be observed in consideration of a woman’s feelings. The groom wouldn’t just rush in on her. After all, her hair might be in rollers! Actually, as the bridegroom’s party of young men would get close to her house, they were obliged to give her a warning. Someone in the wedding party would give out a shout, “The Bridegroom comes.”

When the bride heard that shout, she knew her young man would be there momentarily. She had only time to light her lamp, grab her honeymoon clothing and go. Her sisters and bridesmaids who wanted to attend also had to have their lamps trimmed and ready. No one would try to walk through ancient Israel with its rocky terrain in the dark of night without caring a lamp.

The groom and his men would charge in, grab the girls and make off with them! The father of the bride and her brothers would look the other way, perhaps just making one quick check to see that this was the young man with the contract, (Jacob should have done this, Gen. 29) and the wedding party would be off.

“... and we shall forever be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:17)

Prophetic Semblance: Within these last three feasts God gives us His prophetic sequence of events. The Feast of Trumpets is the rapture of the bride and the beginning of, or shortly thereafter, the world will see the beginning of Daniels 70th week which we call the Tribulation. The Feast of Trumpets is the first fall feast on the Jewish calendar of events in the month of Tishrei (September) it is only 10 days before the Day of Atonement.

Part 4 – Eschatology, The study of *End-Time* Events
The Doctrine of the “Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Bride of Christ

Rev. 4:1 (NASB), “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like **the sound of a trumpet speaking with me**, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” (*Emphasis added*)

The fulfilling of Feast of Trumpets is found in Rev. 4:1 “The sound of a trumpet.” It is at this point that the rapture of the bride will occur. Shortly afterwards the seven seals of the scroll will be broken (Rev. 6) and the Seal Judgments will begin. Notice in the above scripture what the Spirit told John towards the end, “... I will show you what must take place **after** these things,” indicating sequence of the events.

Again, I cannot emphasize the importance of God’s order of events and so it is with the Feasts also. It is an error to think you can have the Feast of Trumpets after Atonement or Tabernacles. God never changes His divine order can be seen in what he has declared.

With the order of the Feast having been given to us by God (Leviticus 23:23-27). Each of the feasts occurred in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar called Tishrei. The Feast of Trumpets heralded the arrival of that seventh month. It also began what is known as the **TEN DAYS OF AWE** between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, wherein the penitent humble themselves in preparation for the Day of Atonement, which is what the tribulation is supposed to produce ... repentance and turning to God.

The 6th Feast :



The Day of Atonement *(Yom Kippur – 10 days from Trumpets).*

YOM KIPPUR also known as the **Day of Atonement**, it is the holiest day of the year in Judaism. Its central themes are atonement and repentance.

Prophetic Semblance: Though it is only 10 days from The Feast of Trumpets prophetically it is the beginning of the Tribulation on earth which starts with a peace treaty (Daniel 9:27). The stimulus for peace talks and ultimately a treaty (covenant) comes after a time of war in the Middle East that will touch the rest of the world. Some believe this will be WW3, there has to be a reason for the peace treaty of Daniel 9:27. We see the fulfilling of these things in Revelation 6:1-19:20.



Daniel 9:27 (KJV), “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon”

One of the reasons for this time of tribulation is God trying to get the attention of the wicked to repent, especially His people Israel. As it says in Revelation 9:20-21 “*They do not repent.*”

Revelation 9:20-21 (NASB), ²⁰ The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; ²¹ and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

The 7th Feast:

Tabernacles (*Sukkot*):

1000 Years

This feast last for seven days. Immediately following this festival is the final, one-day festival called the eighth day. These two festivals together last for eight consecutive days (Leviticus 23:33-39) and picture the final steps in God’s master plan to bring all of humanity into His eternal family.



The FEAST of TABERNACLES is also known as the Feast of Ingathering (Leviticus 23:34; Exodus 23:16) and is called Sukkot by the Jews today.

This festival pictures the 1,000-year rule of Jesus Christ on this earth, known as the Millennium (Revelation 20:4-6) to the gentiles and Sukkot to the Jews. This follows the Feast of the “Day of Atonement” (Revelation 20:1-3).

The picture here is that the righteous shall enter into the Lords Sukkot and shall dwell with Him, meaning we shall rule and reign with Him for 1000 years (Revelation 20:4-6).

Prophetic Semblance: Christ will set up His Kingdom following His return to the earth. Isaiah describes this future period as a time of peace when God’s law will go forth to all nations from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4). The fierce nature of the animals will change (Isaiah 11:6; 65:25), the earth will become highly productive (Isaiah 35:1), and, most important, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). With Satan’s evil influence removed, all of humanity will at last learn God’s ways.

This perfect environment will be designed to offer all people the opportunity to repent of their sins and come to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Zechariah 14:16-19 (KJV), ¹⁶“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷And it shall be, that whosoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. ¹⁸And if the family of

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Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. ¹⁹This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

The two elements that are interesting in Zachariah’s prophecy are:

1. “...Everyone that is left from ALL nations...”- speaking of a remnant from a great global catastrophe
2. “...Come up to Jerusalem to worship the King...” – The nations will come up to Jerusalem to worship the Messiah who will sit on the throne of David and restore his fallen tabernacle.

This is the only time we hear the name Feast of Tabernacles in conjunction with some global events (tribulation). The gentiles from outside of Israel together with the Jews will go to Jerusalem to be part of the Feast of Tabernacles each year.



SECOND PICTURE

The Pattern of a Doctrine is Established

Shadows of things to come

✚ In the shadow of **Noah**, the pattern is established



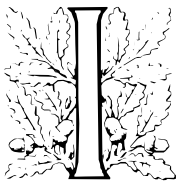
✚ In the shadow of **Lot**, the pattern is established.



To The Bride of Jesus Christ



Shall We Have Tribulation?



In answer to the question, "Will the Bride of Christ go through **Tribulation**?" we must answer "**YES!**" If you want to know if the Bride of Jesus Christ will go through the seven year event we call “The Tribulation” then the answer is "**NO**”! There is a difference.

What are we talking about?

Let’s step back for a minute and find out. The prophet Daniel prophesied about a time period of 490 years before their Messiah would return. All Jews look for this event pointing to the return of their Messiah and the setting up of the old King David kingdom where Israel will reign over all the nations of the world. We read this prophecy in Daniel chapter 9.

Daniel 9: 24, 27, ²⁴“Seventy weeks (shabua [*heptad*] weeks of years) are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. ... ²⁷ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,”

This prophecy started its countdown when Artaxerxes King of Persia signed his decree to allow the rebuilding of the city and its walls in the year 457 B.C. It can be found in Ezra 7:12-13. Exactly 483 years later we find Jesus riding into Jerusalem’s Eastern Gate and three days after that He is crucified on the day of Passover, April 28, 28 A.D. At that point the countdown to the Messiah was changed because of Israel’s unbelief, and a new timeline established. The last of week of years changed from 2520 days to 2520 years.

Today, like some many of our brothers and sisters in the Lord ... we wait on the promise. One more shabua and the Lord returns, this last shabua week of seven years, the

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Christian church calls “The Tribulation.” It will be the worst time in all of human history or will ever be.

To this event the Apostle Paul told the church in Thessalonica two messages, 1. God’s wrath is not appointed to them who believe. 2. They will be coming back with Him (Jesus) at His return.

Let’s look at something Jesus said

John 16:33, ³³ “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

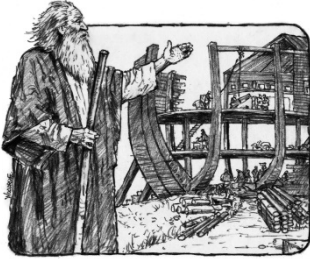
Jesus said we shall have “Tribulation” He did not say we will go through THE TRIBULATION. Let’s look at five other translations of that verse not just King James.

1. New International Version (NIV) “... In this world you will have trouble.”
2. New Revised Standard (NRS) “... In the world you face persecution.”
3. Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible (RHE) “... In the world you shall have distress.”
4. Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSB) “... You will have suffering in this world.”
5. SBL Greek New Testament (SBLG) ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐν ἐμοὶ εἰρήνην ἔχητε · ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλίψιν ἔχετε, ἀλλὰ θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον.

So back to what I said at the beginning of this section ... In answer to the question, "Will the Bride of Christ go through **Tribulation** (*trouble, persecution, distress, suffering or δοκιμασία*)?" I must answer "**YES!**" If you want to know if the Bride of Jesus Christ will go through the seven year event we call “The Tribulation [*shabua/heptad*]” then the answer is "**NO**”!

I believe we can find in scripture at least two very pronounced and parallel examples from the Old Testament of this teaching of the Pre-tribulation Rapture. In these two cases we see how God dealt with those who have come before us and so in like manor He reveals His plan to us.

Noah – A Foreshadowing of the early rapture of the Bride.



(Genesis 6:11–9:19)



✚ In the shadow of **Noah**, the pattern is established

- ✚ Three characteristics of Noah mentioned in scripture. Gen 6:9, “... Noah was a **RIGHTEOUS** man, **BLAMELESS** in his time; Noah **WALKED WITH GOD.**” Noah was what Jesus commanded us to be, Noah was an “overcomer.”
- ✚ Noah and his family was safely in the Ark for seven days (Gen. 7:10) before judgment began. Noah never felt one drop of the rain. You could see this event as a type of “Pre-Judgment” event, Noah and his family were safe in the Ark for seven days.
- ✚ It was God who closed the door to the ark (Gen. 7:16-17) sealing those inside the Ark from the judgment outside. This shows how God delivers believers from Judgement, removing them to safety before it falls. Noah and his family spent a total time in the Ark, exactly 382 days.

Notice: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man.” This means that God will provide an escape for His Bride from the world-wide judgement of the Tribulation, just as He did in the days of Noah.

The pre-flood disappearance of Noah into the Ark was a “TYPE” of the picture we see in the rapture of the bride. In both cases (Noah and family and the Bride of Christ) are being lifted high above the Judgement below. What God has done in the past He can and He will do again concerning His bride. This is a perfect picture of the pre-Tribulation Rapture, which establishes a pattern of how God will (in the last days) deal with His bride. His bride will disappear into their Bridegroom (taken to His Father’s house) rising up above the flood of the 21 Judgments of Revelations, which will come upon the earth.

This is confirmed by the parallel passage in Matthew:

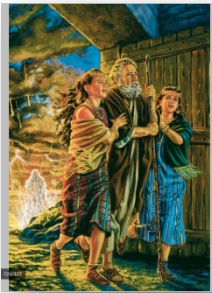
Matthew 24:37-42: “As the days of Noah were, so also will the Coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah

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entered the Ark, and did not know until the Flood came and took them all away, so also will the Coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken (to be with the Lord in the Rapture) and the other left (to go through the Tribulation). Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken (in the Rapture) and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.”



Lot – A Foreshadowing of the early rapture of the Bride



✚ In the shadow of **Lot**, the pattern is established.

(Genesis 6:11–9:19)



The parallel of Sodom and Gomorrah ... Lot had tribulation!

The conditions in Sodom and Gomorrah were as such that they ate, drank, bought, sold, planted and built. This in its self is no sin, but they ignored the preaching of Abraham in favor of their sin (Their sins were numerous including homosexuality of which they are most remembered by.)

Genesis 19:5, “**And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.”**

Jude 1:7, “**just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”**

Luke 17:28-33, ²⁸It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; ²⁹but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one

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who is in the field must not turn back.³² Remember Lot’s wife.³³ Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.

Jesus compared the Judgement of Sodom to the time of Judgement at the End of the Age when He will be revealed. As with the analogy with Noah, the parallels are:

- (1) To life on earth just before the Judgement,
- (2) The Judgement itself, and
- (3) The deliverance (rescue) of believers from the Judgement Zone just before it falls.

- 1. **BEFORE** the Judgement fell on Sodom, people were carrying on in their normal materialistic lives ignoring God. The society was characterized by the throwing off of all moral restraint, resulting in open immorality and violence, as revealed by what they wanted to do to the angels. In particular, it was marked by open, militant homosexuality:

Isaiah 3:9 “The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves.”

Isaiah 5:20, “Woe (Judgement) to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Jesus said that in the days just before He returns to judge the world, it will be like Sodom in the days of Lot. Thus it will be ripe for Judgement. This is one of the signs of the last days. Conditions today perfectly fit this description, confirming that we are near the End of the Age, showing us that Judgement is close.

- 2. The **JUDGMENT** of Sodom came down from Heaven, devastating the whole area. Likewise, the Tribulation Judgements will come down from Heaven, devastating the whole earth (see Revelation).
- 3. Immediately before Judgement fell upon Sodom, Lot was removed from it, to a place of safety. This again shows how God **DELIVERS** believers from Judgement. Notice: “As in the days of Lot ... so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” This means that God will provide an escape for believers from the Judgement of the Tribulation, just as He did for Lot. The pre-Judgement evacuation of Lot from Sodom by the Lord and His angels is a classic picture of the pre-

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Tribulation Rapture of the Bride (by the Lord and His angels, 1Thessalonians 4:16,17) removing us from the Judgement Zone, just before the Tribulation judgements come down from Heaven upon the earth.

Just as God provided a way of escape for believers before the Judgement of Sodom, saving (removing) Lot out of destruction.

2 Peter 2:9, “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished.”

We will escape the coming Judgement (Tribulation) if we trust in the Lord. As Lot was delivered, so we too will be raptured before the Judgements of the Tribulation fall on earth.

Lot and his family had not been out of Sodom one hour, (just far enough out of the way so they would not be hurt) before Judgement fell. Jesus said it will be the same at the Rapture. As soon as His people are removed, the Tribulation Judgements will begin. There will no longer be any-thing to stop God from moving in Judgement. But Judgement could not fall until Lot was removed (Genesis 19:22). If one man stopped God’s wrath falling upon Sodom, how much more must the Bride be removed before God’s Tribulation of Wrath can fall upon the world?

This answers the question: Does the Bride of Christ go through the Tribulation, or does God remove her in the Rapture before it starts? Thus the Pre-Tribulation Rapture perspective is confirmed by the story of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah.

part 5



Standing on the Promises

of Christ my King

Through eternal ages let his praises ring
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing
Standing on the promises of God

Standing, standing
I'm standing on the promises of God my Savior
Standing, standing

I'm standing on the promises of God
Standing on the promises, I cannot fall
Listening every moment to the Spirit's call
Resting in my Savior as my all in all
Standing on the promises of God

Standing, standing
Standing on the promises of Christ my Savior
Standing, standing

I'm standing on the promises of God.

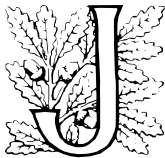
... Amen!

The Promises

Jesus made to His Bride



To those who have Overcome

 Jesus made many promises to those who would overcome the world. So I thought it of no less importance to then look briefly at just who is an Overcomer and how is it that they overcome?

First we have to remember that we can do nothing of ourselves that it is of the Lord who does it.

John 15:4-5, “⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Too often we think there are things we can do on our own, or resolve on our own. We reason that, “We don’t want to bog God down to much with our own needs,” so only the real important things we come to Him in pray for.

But Jesus said we can’t do anything apart from Him. We need to remember this today. We breathe today because Jesus strengthens us. We can walk today because Jesus strengthens us. We can read today because Jesus strengthens us. We can overcome sin today because Jesus **STRENGTHENS US**. We can move spiritual mountains because Jesus strengthens us.

If we don’t have Jesus’ strength, then we have nothing. The fact is, were only doing the things we think we can do on our own because Jesus is working behind the scenes. We need to acknowledge Him in all our ways.

If Jesus then gives us strength to overcome sin, than it is Jesus who has made us overcomers in this world. As every covenant promise has two parts to

it then what do we have to do to be called “Overcomers?” Let’s see what the scriptures tell us.

1 John 5:4-5, “⁴For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 4:4, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

To those who have overcome they shall not see the tribulation.

Revelation 3:10, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Note: The word “*Patience*” in this verse has also been translated [*perseverance, steadfastness, patient endurance*] in other words ... “Overcomers.”

Jesus is coming for those who have learned through patient endurance and perseverance, being born of God through their faith in Jesus. Not people who claim to be Christian and followers of Jesus, but in reality they are Christian in name only, their hearts being far from God.

To those who have overcome the world you are The Bride of Christ.

The realization of the pattern of prophecy ...

The OLD fulfilled in the NEW

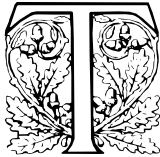
Remember Jesus’s promise to His bride ... “I go to prepare a place for you, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

This is the Pre-Tribulational Rapture

The Witness of the Prophet Jeremiah



Jeremiah 30:7, “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.”



he verse begins with a declaration, “Alas! For that day is great,” Other translations render that phrase as, “How terrible that day will be!” (NOG)¹⁶ “How dreadful that day will be!” (CJB)¹⁷ “How awful that day will be” (NIV)¹⁸.

Jeremiah also tells us what time period this great; terrible; dreadful, and awful day accrues; God calls it the time of “Jacob’s trouble.” Remember Jacobs name was changed to Israel and the prophecies given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel were for Daniel and his people (Israel) and the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24).

The time of Jacobs Trouble is a reference to the last week of the seventy week (*shabua*) prophecy of Daniel.¹⁹ We call this last week of seven years the Tribulation period. Prophetically it is called the times of Jacobs (Israel’s) Trouble. Here the prophet declares that “he,” (God’s people) **shall be saved out of it.**

¹⁶ Names of God Bible

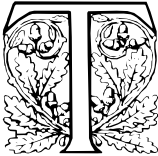
¹⁷ Complete Jewish Bible

¹⁸ New International Version Bible

¹⁹ Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks (Shabua), one week of seven years

The Witness of the Apostle Paul

In his letter to the
Church at Thessalonica



Timothy comes back to Corinth with news about the church at Thessalonica. He told Paul and Silas that the church was strong, but there was persecution and there were questions by the believers about those who have died in the faith, most likely by persecution. It was for their sake and their comfort that Paul then adds,

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1

1 Thess.1:9-10, "... how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which **delivered us from the wrath to come.**"

The comfort to the church was that Christ has already delivered them (and us) from the wrath²⁰ to come. The church was already being persecuted, so they were not being delivered from their present wrath.

There are two different ways to view this.

One, that Paul and the early church believed that Christ was coming back in their lifetime (Doctrine of Imminence) and they would be saved from the wrath still yet to come in their lifetime.

Two, Paul's message of deliverance though it was a comfort to the local church, did not stop the church from being persecuted and many died.

So Paul's words were two-fold, to comfort the present church as much as possible, but then forward looking to a future time of the greater wrath to come (**LAW of DOUBLE REFERENCE**).

Like John's seven messages to the churches in Asia, Paul's message here is for the local church, but also a fit for the future church and church age for which the event would apply, which is the Laodicean church.

²⁰ "Wrath" used here is the Greek word "Orge" [*or-gay*] Strong's #3705 – anger, indignation. Also, "day of wrath" (Zeph. 1:14-15)

In chapter two Paul again comforts the church with these words.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 2

1 Thess. 2:19-20, “¹⁹ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you **in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?**

²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.”

The crown Paul refers to is one of five crowns spoken about in scripture as rewards for the saints for their works and given after the rapture of the Bride. Paul is saying that we are in the presence of the Lord when He comes back at His coming, (Rev.19:14). This would then be speaking about the second coming of Jesus with His saints after the Marriage of the Lamb and His Bride the church (Rev. 19:7-9).

1 Thessalonians Chapter 3

1 Thess. 3:13, “To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all his saints.**”

It is clear then that Paul wanted the bride to know that she would be saved from the wrath to come and would come back (not just some of the saints, but ALL the saints) with Jesus at His second coming on that great “Day of the Lord.”

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4

1 Thess. 4:13-18, “¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds**, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” KJV

(Discussed in the next section)

1 Thessalonians Chapter 5

1 Thess. 5:9, “9 For God hath **not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Paul’s comfort for the church at Thessalonica was in knowing that they will have no part in the “Wrath,” to come.

Colossians 3:4, “**When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.**”

The Witness of Jude

Jude also foresees the Lord’s return with His people to execute the judgment referred to in many other passages relating to His public appearing.

Jude 14, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the **Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**”



The Witness of the Apostle John (Revelation 3:7-13)

In John’s letter to the church at Philadelphia Jesus makes the church a promise based on a condition.

Revelation 3:10, “Because you have kept the word of my patience, **I also will keep you from the hour of temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

In Revelation John’s word of comfort to the church seems to come with a condition, “you have kept the word of my patience (this has also been translated *[my*

command to endure with patience], also [*my command to persevere*]).” This is the basis of a covenant. In this case if the believer or bride is steadfast in their faith through their trials in this life, then Jesus promises to keep them **from** the hour of temptation (Tribulation) which will come on the entire world. He does not make you that promise for your personal times of tribulation, He does promise to be there with you in those times of your darkest hours which you will have. There is a difference between “keep you from something,” or to “be there for you in something.”

At the time John was writing this the entire world had not seen crises at the level coming during the tribulation period. Jesus made this promise to the church at the end of the age, the church that would be here during the event, the last church age, the Laodicean Church. Jesus makes this promise to you and I, that “*He will keep us from the hour of temptation which will come onto the entire world.*”

Revelation 3:10, the word “from” (#1537 is the word {ek,} meaning **out of**.) The word “ek” when referring to the church becomes {Ekklesia #1577} meaning “The Assembly,” The assembly of the called out ones. As Abraham was “**CALLED OUT FROM**” = {ek} so is the bride of Jesus Christ, who is the church. The bride of Christ is and was always meant to be **CALLED OUT** (out of the world). The church is an Ekklesia of peculiar people, because this world is **NOT THEIR HOME**.



We are told by Paul and Jesus that the Saints, the Church, the Bride of Christ would be saved **out** of this time and **from** this time (“from” [*ek meaning out of* #1537, 1577] of Rev.3:10 Ekklesia)

Note: Word Study, Ekklesia is a noun, Feminine.

1577 *ekklēsia* (from [1537](#) /ek, “out from and to” and [2564](#) /kalēō, “to call”) – properly, people *called out from* the world and to God, the *outcome* being the *Church* (the mystical *body of Christ*) – i.e. the universal (total) body of believers whom God calls *out* from the world and *into* His eternal kingdom.

[illegible]

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The Signs of His Coming

(Ref. Mt. 24; Lu. 21; Mk.13)



hen we start to talk about the signs of Jesus' return our attention is quickly directed to Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24. It is here that Jesus gives us several signs of His return.

1. There shall be **WARS** and **RUMORS of WARS** including **FAMINES**, and **PESTILENCES** and, **EARTHQUAKES** in *divers places (Mt.24:6-7). But then you might say, that these signs we had with us from the very beginning so there is no new revelation here.

* "divers places," The word *divers* is an old spelling of *diverse*.

The *phrase divers* places just means "many different places."

1. Increase **WICKEDNESS** and the **LOSS OF LOVE** (Mt. 24:12). But you might then also say this too has been going on forever, because man has always had a sin nature, so nothing special about this sign.
2. Then there is the sign Jesus also mentioned, the **SIGN of NOAH** which was covered in part 2 of this study (Mt. 24:37-42).

Mathew 24; 37-42, ³⁷ "And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. ³⁸For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, ³⁹and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. ⁴⁰Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: ⁴¹two women *shall be* grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.

The sign of the "Time of the End."

Here is a helpful thing to remember when looking at the signs of Jesus' return. All the events mentioned in Matthew twenty-four have happened before even hundreds of years ago and so previous church ages have been deceived thinking Jesus was coming back in their time. Look at what told the angel told the Prophet Daniel.

Daniel 12:4, “⁴ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”

The Lord is saying that the knowledge and understanding of Daniels book (and all “End time” events) is to be withheld until a specific time. He then goes on to describe for us that specific time, He calls it the “End Times.” It is clarified by two things, 1. Men shall run to and fro about the earth (Planes, trains, automobiles). 2. Knowledge shall be increased. This is an accurate description of the world we live in today, the Laodicean church age.

But when does this period called the “End Times” begin? When can we **START** looking for the signs Jesus talked about and know they are for us a signal of the return of Jesus?

2. The sign of Israel back in her own land

Ezekiel 37:21-22, “²¹ And say unto them, Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, where they have gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: ²² And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

The sign of Israel coming back into their own land marks the beginning of the End Times. Now is the time when we consider the signs that Jesus spoke of and now is the beginning of sorrows, and of the birth pains.

Mark 13:8, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.”

Other translations interpret “*Birth pains*” as “*Sorrows*.”

From this point forward look for the signs of wars and rumor of wars, of famines, and pestilence and earthquakes in divers places. Now we are seeing and experiencing a foreshadowing of things to come, the beginning of our sorrows, the “Birth pains” of tribulation.

3. The Single Biggest Sign of Jesus Return

The Sign of Matthew 24:3-5

(Apostasy in and the Deception of the Church)

Matthew 24:3-5, “³And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world? ⁴And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

The statement “shall deceive many” also includes deception within the church. Many shall be deceived and false doctrines will abound. The single biggest sign of the Lords return is this ... **THE MAGNITUDE OF DECEPTION IN THE CHURCH TODAY!!!** And nothing has been like it in modern history.

This warning was also repeated by the Apostle Paul as he addressed the church in Thessalonica.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, “² Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, ² That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”;

There must be a falling away first and the reason given for it is **DECEPTION**. That great falling away is from the church and from faith and sound doctrines of Jesus Christ. Only then will that man of sin, the son of perdition be revealed.

The true church today is being told they must accept their brothers of different faiths (Interfaith Movement) and of different gods, bind together as one.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

1 Timothy 4:1, “⁴ Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Satan is bringing a strong delusion for those who love not the truth, for the truth will be hard to find and what has been “Sound Doctrine” will be considered as inflammatory and anti-social.

Revelation 3:10, “Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Note: The word “patience” here refers to perseverance. Jesus is saying those who *persevere* will he keep from the tribulation.

A last minute reminder for those who love him and have overcome the world and who keep His commandments; to trust in Him, and to endure sound teaching tested by the Spirit of God. Stay true to your first love which is God and He will keep you from the temptation (deception) which has now come upon the entire world. We are in and we are experiencing the “Beginning of Sorrows.”

DECEPTION ... Deception ... Deception is the number one sign of the times just before Jesus comes back at the rapture of His church.

The church of Jesus Christ has been lulled into a spirit of complacency of that which is going on around it. Many churches have adapted its services not to offend anyone. It is tailored to appease congregations because after all the business of “Church” must go on. The church has become a business of which the Pastor is the C.E.O. and he is busy running his church.

Take a minute and let’s look at what Jesus had to say to us the Laodicean church.

Revelation 3:14-22, ¹⁵ ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The problem with the Laodicean church (the church today) is that it is burdened with wealth. It believes it can fulfil the Great Commission if it just had more money. The church today builds community centers and has become mega in size and budgets. The services are more of a production to draw in the masses.

Something is missing, so Jesus stands outside and knocks on the doors of His church, does anyone hear Him and will they know enough to just open the door and let Him in?

The **GOSPEL** of **ACCOMMODATION** is alive and well in some churches today. “Be more accepting of one another” they preach. If we were talking about truly loving your neighbor as yourself (Mt.22:39) then preach it from the highest places, but what they really mean is love them by accepting their sin. They want to be loved not only for who they are, but also for what they have become.

The great deception of the church will also manifest its self in ways that true believers will be looked down on as intolerant. What was once wrong will be celebrated and applauded by the elite of the world. Those who flaunt their sin are called courageous and brave to do such new things. It will be considered ground breaking enlightened to accept the open perversions of today’s sinful generation, but God clearly calls it sin. Openly defiant of God and His commandments, they claim His love for them just the way they are and the sin in which they practice. The sinner now demands acceptance of his sin. Their cause is freedom from discrimination of their lifestyle of sin.

part 7

Just the Facts

part 7

Rapture Facts

Before we get into the “Main Event” of this study I want to look at a few facts concerning the Rapture of the Church found in scripture.

1. **AS TO THE TIME:** The exact time that Jesus will come back and call His bride into the clouds and take her home with His (John 14:1-3). When Jesus was on the earth He said ... “But of that day or hour no man knows, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither, (not yet) the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32).

Mark 13:32 (NASB), But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*.

After His Resurrection and before His Ascension, He refused to satisfy the curiosity of His Disciples, saying to them, “It is not for you to know the times of the seasons which the Father has put in His own power [*authority*]” (Acts 1:7). Jesus knew of Daniel’s prophecy of the **SEVENTY WEEKS** (Dan.9:20-27), but He fixed no dates to their fulfillment. The student of prophecy is not to be a date-setter, but he is to watch. There is nothing to prevent Christ coming for His church at any time.

2. **AS TO THE MANNER OF HIS COMING:** He will return in the **SAME MANNER** as He went (Acts 1:11). He went up **BODILY** and **VISIBLY** and He shall come in like manner. He went in a cloud, and He will return in a cloud.

Revelation 1:7 (NASB), “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

The only difference in this His **SECOND COMING** is that when he left he went up alone, but He will return as a King (Luke 19:12), followed by a mighty host of heaven and an army of those called His Bride (Rev.19:18). The return of Jesus Christ will be in two different ways, some call these **STAGES** of His return. Let me say there is a difference between a “**COMING**” and a “**RETURN**.”

The two “stages” of His return are separated by a period of seven years. The first stage of His return is called “**THE RAPTURE** (His coming),” and the second stage is called “**THE REVELATION** (His return),” for it is the revealing of Gods Son for who He is and all the earth will finally know who He is and He comes to rule and to reign.

First Stage, as to His coming ... As a good Jewish Bridegroom it would be his responsibility to prepare a place for him and his bride. When he was finished He would come back and get her and take her to her new home. In the scripture below we see Jesus’ promise to His bride.

John 14:1-3 (NASB), “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

It was Jesus who promised His bride “I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am, there you may be also” is the rapture event of Jesus receiving us to Himself. This the Apostle Paul describes for us in his letter to the Thessalonians.

1st Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB), ¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

From this we can see that the Rapture will be twofold.

1. The Resurrection of the “**DEAD IN CHRIST.**”
2. The Translations of the “**LIVING SAINTS.**”

This twofold character of the Rapture Jesus revealed to Martha when He was about to raise her brother Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:25-26, ²⁵ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

In v25 above we find in Jesus' words "though he were dead, yet shall he **LIVE**," (the **FIRST RESSURRECTION SAINTS**); ... "and whosoever **LIVES** (is alive when Jesus comes back) and believes in Me shall **NEVER DIE**."

This twofold character of the rapture, Paul emphasizes in his chapter on the resurrection.

1 Cor.15:51-57, (KJV), ⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

3. THE RAPTURE WILL BE ELECTIVE: The rapture will not only separate the saints from the unbelievers, but it will separate husbands from wives, brothers from sisters, friends from friends.

Luke 17:34-36, ³⁴ I tell you, in that night there shall be *two men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. ³⁵ *Two women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ³⁶ *Two men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

In the above text the words "men" and "women" in the original text are not there, and so the passage should read "two in one bed," husband and wife, or two brothers, or sisters, or two friends. Two in bed indicates night; two grinding at the mill, morning or evening; two in the field mid-noon. This shows that the rapture will happen all over the earth at the same time or as the Apostle describes it in a "**MOMENT**," or the "**TWINKLING OF AN EYE**."

Jesus' coming for His bride will be as He described it "... As lightning coming out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." (Mt.24:27). The Rapture will be the most startling event of this Age and Dispensation. As it occurs all over the world at the same time that part of the world that is not asleep will witness it with their own eyes. As to the "Shout of the Lord," and the "Voice of the Archangel,"

and the “Trump of God” we do not know whether their sound will be heard and distinguished by others than the “dead in Christ” and the “Living saints.”

We do know that one day the Father spoke to Jesus and the people around Him mistook it for thunder (John 12:28-29). When Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and spoke to him the men with him stood speechless “hearing a voice,” but seeing no man, and not understanding what was said (Acts 9:3-7). We know however that the “dead in Christ” will hear the sound, for it will be “intensely penetrating.” There will be no graves so deep, no catacombs so rock covered, no pyramids or mausoleums so thick, but what the sound shall reach their depths and the dead in Christ shall hear the cry ... “awake you sleeping saints and arise from the dead, it is **MORNING**, the morning of the **FIRST RESURRECTION**.” For those who are alive and it will be night on some side of the world and communities will awake to find the real Christians gone, disappeared in the night. Many may hear the sound of the Midnight cry ... “**BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMES**.”



A Christian Love Story



From Zola Levitt's book by the same title.²¹

²¹ You can find the complete book and other books by the same author on his WEB site at. <https://store.levitt.com/CLS>

INTRODUCTION



ur Lord was Jewish and He did things like a Jew. So often, if we consult the Jewish law and custom, we find many of the motivations for the particular actions of the Lord. In this section we will be considering those Jewish customs pertaining to matrimony. After all you are the bride of Christ ... this pertains to you.

Obviously, wedding customs varied from nation to nation and from time to time. Even in today's world we see different traditions of marriage taking place at the same time in different countries. The Jews had their own peculiar ways, based on the **OLD COVENANT**, and the Lord, as we shall see, followed those traditions in choosing a bride. As we walk through the story of the ancient Jewish ritual of a young Jewish man acquiring for himself a bride, we will relate it to the modern Bride of Christ and how Jesus is following the ancient traditions of His people. If we understand what is old we may indeed discover what is new and how it affects us today.

We should understand that the Jews had no dating or courtship as we now think of those things. Marriage to them was a practical legal matter, established by contract and carried through by exacting procedure. These customs of the Jewish wedding ceremony were practiced in Jesus' time; they were most fascinating and complex.

In Jesus' time, when the young man of Israel saw the girl he wanted (or the girl his father said he wanted), he would approach her with a marriage contract. He would come to her house with a covenant, a true legal document, giving the terms by which he would propose marriage. The most important consideration in the contract was the price the bridegroom would be willing to pay to marry this particular bride.

The Bride Price

(Gen. 34:12; Exo. 22:16-17; 1 Sam.18:25)

The “**BRIDE PRICE**”²² is still used today in parts of the Mediterranean and African worlds and while it seems most archaic to us now, it had some useful purposes. First of all, if the bridegroom was willing to sacrifice hard cash for his bride, he was showing his love in a most tangible way. Second, it was a favor to his future father-in-law. We must remember that in those days of farming and heavy labor, it was something of a liability to raise a daughter. A family of sons would prosper more because of the built-in work force; but a family with daughters would expect to “consolidate their losses” when the girls were mature enough to attract bridegrooms.²³ And so the father of the bride was more or less paid off for his earlier expenses and for his patience and skill in raising a girl to be good marriage material.

The bridegroom would present himself to the bride with this agreement, offering to pay a suitable price for her, and she and her father would consider this contract. If the terms were suitable, the bride and the groom would drink a cup of wine together and this would seal the bargain. This cup was most significant. It signified the bridegroom’s willingness to sacrifice in order to have this bride. It was offered as a toast to the bride, and of course, it showed the bride’s willingness to enter into this marriage.

Then the groom would pay the price. It should be said that this price was no modest token, but was set so that the new bride would be a costly item, which was the idea. The young man had no delusions that he was getting something for nothing. He would pay dearly to marry the girl of his choice.

When the matter was settled the groom would depart. He would make a little speech to his bride, saying, “I’m going to prepare a place for you,” he would build her a bridal chamber, a little mansion, in which they would have their future honeymoon.

We should appreciate that this was a complex undertaking for the bridegroom. He would actually build a separate building on his father’s

²² Example: Genesis 29:18-30 – Jacob agrees to work for Rachel, but gets her sister Leah.

²³ It is thought that Mary the mother of Jesus was between 13-15 years old.

property, or decorate a room in his father's house. The bridal chamber had to be beautiful, one doesn't honeymoon just anywhere; and it had to be stocked with provisions since the bride and groom were going to remain inside for seven days. This construction project would take the better part of a year, ordinarily, and the father of the groom would be the judge of when it was finished. (We can see the logic there, obviously, if it was up to the young man, he would throw up some kind of modest structure and go get the girl!) But the father of the groom, who had been through this previously and was less excited, would be the final judge on when the chamber was ready and when the young man would go to claim his bride.

The bride, for her part, was obligated to do a lot of waiting. She would take the time to gather her trousseau and be ready when her bridegroom came. Custom provided that she had to have an oil lamp ready in case he came late at night in the darkness. She had to be ready to travel at a moment's notice. During this long period of waiting she was referred to as "consecrated," "set apart," "bought with a price." She was truly a lady-in-waiting, but there was no doubt that her bridegroom would return. Sometimes a young man would depart for a very long time indeed, but of course he had paid a high price for his bride; even though there were other young women available, he would surely return to the one with whom he had made a covenant.

As the year went on, the bride would assemble her sisters and bridesmaids and whoever would go with her to the wedding when the bride groom came, and they would each have their oil lamps ready. They would wait at her house every night on the chance that the groom would come, along with his groomsmen, and sweep them all away to a joyous and sudden wedding ceremony.

Meanwhile, the bridegroom would be building and decorating with all that he had. His father would inspect the chamber from time to time to see if it were ready. If you were to come along the road at this point and saw the young man working on his bridal chamber, you might ask him, "When's the big day?" But the bridegroom would answer, "Only my father knows that."

Finally, the chamber would be ready and the groom would assemble his young friends to accompany him on the exciting trip to claim his bride. The big moment had arrived and the bridegroom was more than

ready. He and his young men would sit out in the night, making every attempt to completely surprise the bride.

And that's the romantic part. All the Jewish brides were "stolen." And the Jews had a special understanding of a woman's heart. What a thrill to her, to be "abducted" and carried off into the night, not by a stranger, but by the one who loved her so much that he had paid a high price for her.

Over at the bride's house, things had to be ready, because the bride would be surprised since her bridegroom would try to come at midnight while she was sleeping. But the oil lamps were ready and the bride had her veil. And while she might be sleeping in her wedding dress, she was definitely surprised. It's a wonder she would sleep at all as the year went on!

Now there were rules to be observed in consideration of a woman's feelings. The groom wouldn't just rush in on her. After all, her hair might be in rollers! Actually, as the young men would get close to her house, they were obliged to give her a warning. Someone in the wedding party would give out a shout.

When the bride heard that shout, she knew her young man would be there momentarily. She had only time to light her lamp, grab her honeymoon clothing and go. Her sisters and bridesmaids who wanted to attend also had to have their lamps trimmed and ready. No one would try to walk through ancient Israel with its rocky terrain in the dark of night without caring a lamp.

The groom and his men would charge in, grab the girls and make off with them! The father of the bride and her brothers would look the other way, perhaps just making one quick check to see that this was the young man with the contract, and the wedding party would be off.

People in the village might be awakened from their sleep by the happy voices of the young people carrying the oil lamps through the streets, and that's how they knew a wedding was going on. Today, we hear car horns, back then they saw the lamps late at night. Those looking on would not know who the bride was because she was still wearing her veil. But she would be returning through the same streets a week later with her groom and then her veil would be off. At the return of the bride with her bridegroom, all the people would know just who got married and they would realize the total significance of this wedding.

When the wedding party reached the house of the groom's father, the bride and groom would go into their chamber and shut the door. No one else would enter. The groom's father, meanwhile, would have assembled the wedding guest and friends, and they would be ready to celebrate the new marriage. Since the wedding was actually going to take seven days (until the appearance of the bride and the groom out of the chamber), it was hard to plan for. Occasionally, the host would run out of wine, as we can well imagine. The Lord himself graced the wedding at Cana with his presence and replenished the wine for the celebrants as told in John 2.

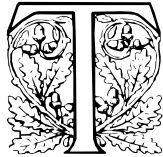
At the end of the week, the bride and the groom would make their long awaited appearance to the cheers of the crowd. There would then be a joyous meal, a marriage supper, which we might refer to as the wedding reception to honor the new couple. At this point, the bride would have discarded her veil since she is now a married woman, and all would see exactly who it was the bridegroom had chosen. The new couple and the guest would enjoy a magnificent feast to conclude the entire matrimonial week.

After the marriage supper, the bride and the groom would depart, not remaining any longer at the home of the groom's father. They would go instead to their own house, which had been prepared by the bridegroom. (The Bride of Christ will spend seven years in heaven at the home of the groom's father, and then they shall return with the bridegroom to occupy the kingdom he has prepared for her.)

This was the complete Jewish wedding in Jesus's time, in all of its glory. Readers of the gospel can easily see the beautiful analogies between this complex procedure and in the manner in which the Lord himself has called out his chosen bride and how His actions then and now reflect the customs of the Jewish wedding. We will review below each of the elements of the Jewish wedding along with the scriptures that explain them. Perhaps there is no happier Bible study then this one.

The Covenant

(Between Jesus Christ and His Bride the issue of our sin)



he church is called “The Bride of Christ” in the New Testament for good reason. It is we who have a covenant relationship with the One who forgives sins. It is we who drink the cup with Him, and we who for whom the price was paid. We are the ones to whom He said, *“I go to prepare a place for you,”* and we are the ones who now await His sudden return.

Our covenant, in all of its fullness, was expressed by the prophet Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NASB), ³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Paul also repeated the same covenant in Hebrews 8:8-12 for the benefit of the bride.

We can see very plainly that these verses **CONSTITUTE** a **CONTRACT**. Terms are given and the parties identified. The Lord made his Covenant with "The house of Israel and with the house of Judah," but it continues to all of those who are the spiritual seed of Abraham and follow the Jewish Messiah. The New Covenant is written in our hearts, in a very real sense. It is not like the old Covenant given to Moses, as explained in verse 32 above. That Old Covenant was etched in stone and totally inflexible and unbreakable - the punishment for breaking it was

death. The New Covenant comes out of a love relationship - we obey the Lord today because we love him, not because we fear Him - and thus the New Covenant is made a matter of the heart.

God purposely contrast this New Covenant with the old in order to make the point that he would forgive our iniquities and forget our sins under the new agreement.

This is the most striking term of the New Covenant - that our sins are forgiven and forgotten. That certainly wasn't true under the Mosaic Law. The people might in effect "file sacrifices" against their sins so that when the Messiah came he would retroactively take that into consideration and forgive them (Romans 3: 25). God went along with an unregenerated people, knowing that forgiveness would be provided when the Messiah paid the price as the final sacrifice. But we are not in that same position. The price has already been paid for our sins so that every last one of them is totally forgiven.

Some Believers don't like this concept, and indeed much of the church spends much of its energy acting as if the Covenant read, "I will forgive you only if you're good." there is a great deal of pretense among the believers that each of us is sinless, or very nearly sinless. But the fact of the matter is, God knows well the hearts of men and has provided a different system for us than he did in the Old Testament. **We are not expected to be sinless; we are expected to believe in the Messiah, who was sinless in our place and paid for our sins.**

We might look at the New Covenant as a "gift certificate" for salvation. When someone gives you a gift certificate, you need only to take it to the store and present it; there will be no charge for the merchandise. It's not that the merchandise is free, but that someone has been there ahead of you and paid for it. When you get the merchandise home, you can misuse it, if you wish. You may take the gifts and damage them, or fail to appreciate them. That would be a shame, of course, but it certainly wouldn't cause the buyer of your gift certificate to come to you demanding the return of the merchandise. In the case of the New Covenant, God, the store owner, has agreed to provide you the merchandise of Salvation in return for the gift certificate purchased for you by his son. It's as simple as that.

You may be asking yourself, *"Can I sin as much as I like and still be saved?"*

Paul covered this when he said, *"Shall I sin more that Grace May abound?"* He made clear that we are not to take our salvation as a license to sin - that would be as bad as damaging the free gift we have received - but, our salvation has been paid for in advance. We can only thank God for this arrangement under which sinners (putting on of the new man) can achieve the glory reached by Christ himself. We would certainly never make it on our own merits.

We will see the fulfillment of v.34 previous page, in the Kingdom of the Lord, when everyone will certainly know the king. He will reside in Jerusalem in the Tabernacle for 1,000 years and it will no longer be necessary for people to teach *"Every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying know the Lord."* When this particular wedding is completed, it will be a happy marriage indeed!

The New Covenant is like a contract also in the respect that it is signed and dated. In the verse following those quoted above, God presents his signature to his contract:

Jeremiah 31:35 (NASB), 35 Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of
the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the
sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts is His name:

There's no doubting whose signature that is!

Now we find a date, as we do on all contracts: If those ordinances depart from before me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever (v.36).

God says plainly that his Covenant will go out of date when Israel ceases to be a nation. Clearly our covenant is still enforced because Israel is a nation today and has really never ceased to be a nation. If all of the Jews would perish - if those who wanted to exterminate the Jewish people ever had their wish - then it is apparent that the New Covenant would go out of date and forgiveness would not be available to anyone. The very presence of the Jews among us is the sign of the New Covenant; it is still in force and every sin of every person who believes is still forgiven.

The Jews are, in this one way, a most special people. As God promised his friend Abraham:

Genesis 12:2-3 (NASB), 2 And I will make you a great
nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great;

And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

But in this case anyone would doubt that Israel will survive, the Lord adds a footnote in the next verse:

Jeremiah 31:37 (NASB), ³⁷ Thus says the LORD, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the LORD.

Obviously, Israel is as secure as the secrets of how the universe is put together. If anyone could tell God how He has set up heaven and earth, He would then cast off the seed of Israel. It's virtually the same argument God used with Job. God inquired, *"Where were you when I laid the Cornerstone of the Earth?"* As if to say, *"Seeing that you have such an intelligent questions, I am sure that you understand as much as God does."* That settles who job is and who God is, and the verse quoted above should settle once and for all any question about the survival of Israel and the Jewish people.

And thus we have our marriage contract and it is an advantageous contract for the bride indeed. *"Which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, says the Lord."* God could very well have been angry enough with Israel that he would have chosen a different Bride for his son. He says, in effect, "I tried to marry them before, but they broke the marriage contract." Nevertheless, in his forgiveness, God makes this Covenant again with Israel, sending his son to that nation and the Holy Spirit to that people. Israel, in turn, sent the Messiah to the world through Jewish missionaries who built the churches of Asia.

It is as if the bridegroom came forward and said to his bride, "I'll pay the price for you and drink the cup with you. I will go to prepare the place for you and if you happen to stumble in the year that I am away, I'll forgive you. If I hear, while I am building the bridal chamber, that you were not waiting for me at home, but had gone out with another man, I



will forgive you and if you try to break my Covenant, I will not allow it to be broke. I will pay for all your sins! "

Here, we have a bridal contract Unbreakable by the bride. How could God possibly make such a contract? Well, we might say this; The price was very high.

The Cup



And so, Jesus came to his own, to the people of Israel, prepared to pay that high price. He came with the New Covenant, to sign it with his blood. The expression "Signed in blood" is thoroughly biblical. When God made His covenants with Abraham, Moses and so forth, he had animals sacrificed and the blood sprinkled to ratify the Covenant. Jeremiah had only prophesied the Advent of the New Covenant; Christ came to sign it and present it.

We see him today drinking the cup with his bride in Matthew 26:27. It was at the Passover table that the Lord did this so appropriately. He was to die that day (the next morning actually [*Passover*], the Jewish day begins at sundown). He took his last opportunity to drink the cup with his bride and sealed the New Covenant:

Mt. 26:27-28 (NASB), 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

Looking at verse 27, we might ask, "What did the Lord say when he gave thanks?" Any Jew can tell you - there is just one Jewish blessing over the wine and it has been said for all time.

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of all the fruit of the Vine."

The fruit of the vine, ultimately, is the bride. Jesus said that he was the True Vine, and the disciples were the branches. Finally, we become the fruit of this figure, and this brings out the toast aspect of this cup. Jesus praised the Creator for bringing forth this bride and he toasted the bride for becoming the true fruit. And then he told all of the believers

to drink this cup so that they would answer his proposal affirmatively and become his proposed Bride.

In verse 28, he announced that the cup was his blood of the New Covenant ("Testament" and "Covenant" are the same word) and that it is shed for the remission of sins. Obviously, this fulfilled Jeremiah's announcement of the New Covenant - the Covenant which would forgive sins. It's interesting to consider that the New Testament itself is our copy of the contract. Should anyone accuse you of sin, you need only show him your copy of the contract to prove that your sins are forgiven. Should the Devil Himself accuse you, and Satan is the "Accuser of the Saints," quoting the terms of the New Testament will settle the matter. You are "Bought with a price." your next responsibility after receiving the bridegroom is to go about, in proper modesty with your Veil, honoring the Covenant that you have made, in the manner of a virgin bride awaiting her promised bridegroom.

You are not to make further sacrifices to impress God. Jesus made it very clear that there's one sacrifice - this one cup - would be sufficient to forgive everyone's sins, all the way up to the kingdom of God:

In v.29 Jesus said, *"But I say it to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's Kingdom."* We are responsible to God for good works. We are more than a bride; we are also workers in the field. But insofar as our Salvation goes, it has been bought and paid for and we cannot lose it or enhance it in anyway according to this contract;

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by Grace you are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is a gift of God: not of Works lest any man should boast."

The Price

How much did our bridegroom pay? We all realize that our Lord went to the cross for us and this was painful, humiliating and so insulting to the Son of God. But do we fully appreciate how much it cost him?

After all, it could be argued that Jesus was a strong, young man, able to walk 75 miles From Galilee to Jerusalem. No one would want to be crucified, but he suffered only six hours. People with cancer die slow, lingering deaths; some of us are born with handicaps we must bear a lifetime. Did Jesus really pay that much?

To find the real value of something, we must ask the purchaser. To people who are very rich, a Cadillac or a fur coat is a small expenditure. To the poor, those things are extremely expensive. Jesus himself commented on how much he was paying in the following verses:

Luke 22:39-43 (NASB), ³⁹ And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. ⁴⁰ When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." ⁴¹ And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, ⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done. ⁴³ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him."

This prayer took place right after the Passover supper when the Lord retired to the Mount of Olives near the temple site. He told his disciples. *"Pray that you enter not into temptation"*, which any bridegroom might have said to his bride. *"Be sure you wait for me, I'll be back for you before you know it. Don't get tempted!"* Many young bridegrooms must have said, in a similar way, the same thing to their betrothed as they departed.

Then Jesus held a private conversation with his Father, saying, *"If you are willing, remove this cup from Me."* This must also have happened from time to time in the old Jewish wedding custom. Many a bridegroom probably returned to his father after learning the price for a particular bride and he asked his advice on whether he should pay it. "Do

you realize how much they want for her?" That must have been a question repeated often in the old tradition. The Jewish bridegroom was wise enough to know that his father's judgments in these matters were trustworthy, and he would consult his father about the amount to be paid. And here we see Jesus clearly expressing that if his Father was willing, the cup should be removed from Him. Of course, like the respectful Jewish bridegroom of old, He trusts his Father's judgment and He said, *"Nevertheless, not my will but yours, be done."*

We get some inkling of how high a price the purchaser was paying in this case from this passage - but we're to learn more later on.

In this case, the bridegroom's Father's will is very clear: In v.43 we read that there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

And now we see the verse that expresses most painfully of all that the purchaser thought of the price: *"And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling down onto the ground (v.44).*

Now when Jesus actually went to the Cross, we might think his Father had special Mercy on Him. It normally took 3 days for a person to die by crucifixion. The condemned one would hang there morning and night as people passed by, dying by inches. He would be naked, suffering from flogging and in total agony until his life slipped away. How was it that this Carpenter, in fine physical condition, was dead in just 6 hours? A simple look into the order of the Jewish feasts answers the question perfectly.

Leviticus 23:5-6 (NASB), ⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. ⁶ Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

The symbol of **Passover** is the sacrifice of the lamb, and Jesus fulfilled it on the cross. The symbol of **Unleavened Bread** is the body of the Lord buried in the Earth (*"if a kernel of wheat falls to the ground..."*, *"This bread is my body"*). Thus to fulfill the second feast, the Lord had to be buried at the beginning of Unleavened Bread, or at sunset on the day of Passover. He was placed on the cross at 9:00 in the morning

and taken down at 3pm. Sundown in April in Israel is about 4:30 or 5:00, and thus the Lord was buried exactly in time to commemorate the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

So the fulfillments progress through the rest of the feasts. **First Fruits**, which some call "Easter," came on the following Sunday (Lev. 23:10-12), and indeed the Lord rose from the dead as the first fruits of those who were to be resurrected (1st Cor.15:22-23). The 4th Feast is **Pentecost**, 50 days later (Lev. 23:15-16), and the Lord sent the Holy Spirit in a great harvest. Three thousand people were saved that day, just as 3,000 people were killed on the day the law came. They had made a golden calf and the Lord was infuriated:

Exodus 32:28 (NASB), "So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day."

But when the Lord sent the Holy Spirit, he returned to Israel exactly 3000 Souls.

Thus the Lord performed exactly in accordance with the first four feasts of Israel. He will do the same in the future, it is clear. We expect the Rapture of the Bride on the fifth feast, the **Feast of Trumpets** (1st Thess. 4:16-17). We expect the return of the Lord to the Earth for the start of the Kingdom on the **Day of Atonement**, when "*All Israel will be saved*" (Zakaria 12:10, 13:1; Romans 11:26). And finally, the Lord will set up His Tabernacle in Jerusalem appropriately enough on the final feast, the **Feast of Tabernacles**. The Tabernacles are a look back to the shelters the Lord gave the children of Israel in the wilderness, and indeed the Lord's Tabernacle will shelter us on this Earth for the duration of the Kingdom. These final three feasts are explained in Leviticus 23:24, 27 and 34, respectfully.

We say all of that above to show that the Lord, who never skipped a Jewish feast, fulfilled each one even in His crucifixion and burial, as well as in His resurrection, His sending of the Holy Spirit, His return at the sound of the trumpet, His second coming on the day when Israel atones, and His establishment of His kingdom on Tabernacles. Thus, it is valid that the Lord had to come off the cross in 6 hours for the simple reason that He was a law-abiding Jew and He had a feast to keep.

What is significant is that Jesus paid the full price. He could have called a legion of angels to avoid the cross, or He could have been brought down from the cross in even in shorter time than 6 hours. His Father might have arranged for Him to have a more merciful death than a flogging and a public crucifixion. But the fact is, He accepted His father's will, was crucified and remained on the cross as long as lawful for Him to do so.

A full knowledge of the price paid for us must Inspire us to live up to the expectations of our bridegroom: Any time the Jewish bride felt tempted to break her contract, it is certain that a mere reading through of the terms would remind her that her bridegroom had paid a great deal and was trusting her to keep her side of the bargain. If we read our contract often and understand it completely, we can more likely glorify the bridegroom as we wait for him.

The Departure



We saw in the Jewish wedding custom that the bridegroom would depart to his father's house after he made the Covenant, drank from the cup and paid the price, likewise, our Lord went on to his father's house with an announcement to his disciples almost using the same words as the Jewish bridegroom must have said:

John 14:1-3(NASB), ¹“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Jesus is in heaven now, preparing our place and we are in the waiting. True, We grow impatient for his return, but then imagine how impatient that Young Bride must have been! People who plan to be married don't like waiting around, especially if they can't even see each other! Probably, In the old days, there were a few variations during the waiting. Then people must have thought they had a violation in the case of Joseph and Mary. Those two were "espoused" (betrothed), not married, and Mary became with child. It is not that serious a matter to the

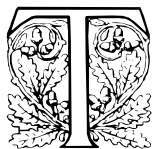
onlookers since undoubtedly this situation had occurred before. But Joseph, at least at first, thought Mary had violated their marriage contract in a most grievous manner, and he sought to "put her away," or cancel the contract. When the angel revealed the true situation to Joseph, he and Mary went on to be married.

In our case, we have been waiting a long time. But we must continue to wait in a manner that would glorify our bridegroom. The veil worn by the bride is simply our good testimony before the world. Our consecrated, set apart ways speak to the unbelievers around us of our loyalty to God and our agreement to marry his son. Paul put it very strongly when he said simply "You are not your own."

We must all fully realize, as we wait, that the Lord is coming. The bridegroom always returned. We hear many sermons on the Lord's return, but we stumble in our walk, reasoning that if he didn't come last year or last week, he probably won't come tonight. But there is coming a night when the Lord will come, and he requires that we be ready and waiting. We can believe that the Jewish bride waited at home every night and trusted constantly in that marvelous night when she would at last hear the shout.

The Meeting in the Clouds

(The fulfillment of a Promise)



he coming of the Lord for his bride, this is most clear in the scriptures:

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17(NASB),¹⁶ "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

Here we see the shout and also the sound of a trumpet.

We have already discussed the trumpet in the connection with the dramatic Feast of Trumpets, which symbolizes the Rapture. But we might look further into that peculiar biblical symbol to fully appreciate its significance. The Rapture of the Bride will be a kind of repeat performance. God had previously delivered His Chosen People into their promised land when Joshua led the Israelites against Jericho. The walls of Jericho were 11 feet thick! So how were the weak and wandering tribes of Israel, with their old men women and children, going to assault this frontier city, who were prepared for just such an attack? When you realize what weapons they had to use then you can realize a great truth thereby:

Joshua 6:5(NASB), “And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the **sound of the trumpet**, all the people shall **shout** with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the **people shall ascend up** every man straight before him.”

What a comparison that verse makes with the Rapture of the Bride of Christ. Indeed, *"The people shall ascend up!"* The key to understanding is found in the name of the leader. We don't often appreciate that the name "Jesus" is a translation of the real name of the Lord. His name in Hebrew is "**Yeshua**," which translates in English to "**Joshua**." In both cases, then, God used the trumpet to deliver his people to their promised land under the leadership of Joshua. Other scriptures explaining the fact of the Rapture also mentions the trumpet:

1 Cor.15:51-53 (NASB), ⁵¹ “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

Indeed, As Paul exalted:

1 Cor.15:55-57 (NASB), ⁵⁵ “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We shall not die, as it should be explained, we all received eternal life the moment we were saved. We may die physically, but the *"The dead in Christ will rise first."* We shall live on with the Lord in His Kingdom and Eternity. Our bridegroom has indeed prepared a wonderful place for us. How marvelous that, *"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."*

Now when the Lord comes for us, we are to have our oil lamps ready and waiting. Oil in the Bible is the Holy Spirit, and we are to have the oil and be ready to travel even in the dark of night. The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) is correctly applied to the Kingdom, but has marvelous applications to this wedding story. In that parable, there were 10 virgins *"Which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom."*

Matthew 25:2-4(KJV), ²"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

The bridegroom in this Parable acted in accordance with the Jewish tradition of totally surprising the bride and catching her asleep:

While the bridegroom tarried they all slept (v.5), but he comes with a shout: *"And at the midnight hour there was a cry made, behold, the bridegroom comes, go out and meet him"* (v.6).

We will see by the following verses that only those virgins with their lamps trimmed with oil or able to go with the bridegroom. The others, suddenly realizing that they were not properly prepared, went out to purchase oil, but they were too late:

Matthew 25:10-12 (NASB), ¹⁰"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

The message is very clear, we must have the Holy Spirit, we must be true believers in the Lord Jesus, to go with him when he comes.

The oil was established as a very essential ingredient as far back as the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness:

Exodus 27:20(NASB), “You shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn always.”

We can learn a great deal from the above scripture we are just like the lampstand in the Tabernacle. We are set aflame once when we first believe in the Messiah, but as we walk, we must consistently take in the oil, which is the Holy Spirit, in order to keep our flame burning brightly. The flame is a beautiful symbol of the Christian faith. With one flame I can light all of the candles in the world and mine will not be diminished.

Understanding the symbol of the oil and the symbol of the trumpet, we are in a position to see how powerful we really are in this world. Gideon went forward with only three hundred men and attacked a force of Midianites numbering over 100,000. Gideon, like the U.S. Marines, came forward with "A Few Good Men," but the Lord had armed Gideon's soldiers in a special way. They carried trumpets in their right hands and oil lamps in their left hands. Remarkably they won that battle with their peculiar style of attack:

Judges 7:20 (NASB), “When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”

Armed with Gods symbol of Deliverance, the trumpet, and the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the oil in the lamps, Gideon's Army prevailed over the pagans. God had chosen to have Gideon attack with such a small Force so that the glory would certainly go to him. And likewise, we carry the Holy Spirit in the same sort of pottery jars used by Gideon's men:

2 Corinthians 4:7(NASB), "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;"

When we break the earthen vessels that are our earthly bodies, the light pours out of us and the oil within convicts the unbeliever. We are a small army, like Gideon's, but outfitted with God's special weaponry, we are invincible in the spiritual battle.

But we must be so absolutely certain that we have the oil. The virgins with the empty lamps could not go into the bridal chamber with the Lord. The Lord Himself concluded that parable:

Matthew 25:13 (NASB), “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

(In this we find the **Doctrine of Imminence**.)

There are a lot of empty lamps around. There are very large churches where the Holy Spirit is never mentioned nor the word of the Lord preached. They are lamps with no oil. They will hold services as usual on the Sunday after the Rapture.

And thus starts the 7 year [*1 shabuah*] Tribulation period, (pictured in the Feast of Atonement) on earth.

The Bridal Chamber



ow is our seven years in heaven with the Lord (while the Tribulation period takes place on earth) like a honeymoon? Actually, what the Lord has prepared for us is called by a rather fearsome name in the scriptures:

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB), “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

We are going to appear before our Lord to review (*evaluate*) the things each of us did in his earthly service. This judgment concerns our works, and not our sins, which were paid for in advance.

Paul is very clear on what will happen in the Judgment seat of Christ. He points out that the only reasonable foundation one can lay in this life is that of Christ, and then he goes on to give the particulars of how our works are judged:

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NASB), ¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it

because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The Lord will put a torch to our works. Those works that are of precious metals will not be harmed, but the wood, hay, and stubble will be burned away. We will be duly rewarded for our good works:

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward (v.14).

And we will suffer losses of our rewards for the works that are burned up:

If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (v.15).

Note the last two phrases in the above verse. Even if we have a great many bad works and therefore few rewards, we still shall be saved. We shall survive this fire of judgment. God has fire that does not consume, such as in the Lake of Fire or in the burning bush seen by Moses. God's purpose in this judgment seat of Christ is not to burn us up, but merely the works unworthy of the bride of Christ. We ourselves will be saved

How is this like a honeymoon? Well, a honeymoon is where the bride groom removes his Brides veils and knows all of her secrets. We will be spiritual creatures when we meet Christ, sinse "we shall all be changed," and so our bridegroom will examine our spiritual secrets. Some honeymoons indeed are not as joyful as we might have expected, married people can tell you, but we're there with someone we love and when all is said and done, we become marriage partners through the experience.

Now that particular moment when the bridegroom tells his friends that the wedding is consummated is also in the gospel. It has to do with that great friend of Jesus, John the Baptist. It seems the Pharisees were approaching him time and time again and asking him if he where the Messiah. From the passages, we can gather that they wished he were the Messiah - they could get along better with a messiah who lived by the Dead Sea and ate locusts and honey than with the carpenter of Galilee, who did so many miracles. If John were the Messiah, then they could

muddle through. It was that mild - mannered young preacher from rustic Nazareth they could not seem to abide with. In one of their dialogues, John, seems to almost lose patience with them, uses this very special moment in the wedding ceremony to illustrate his point. He told them:

John 3:28-29 (NASB), ²⁸ “You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent ahead of Him.’” ²⁹ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

Perhaps John, an Old Testament saint killed before the cross, and a dear friend of our Bridegroom's father, will serve this function in our wedding in heaven.

The Marriage Supper

(Rev. 19:7-8)



hen the wedding guests get the good news from the chamber, they celebrate. Who will be the wedding guests at our marriage to the Lord?

Well, In keeping with their tradition, they will be the friends of the bridegroom's father - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, and his many other friends from the great days of the old Covenant. How magnificent it will be to greet all those saints when we come out of the chamber and sit down to our marriage supper!

Perhaps Daniel will sit by Jeremiah, and he will say "You know, I read your book, and gathered most important information from it." (Dan, 9:2; Jer. 29:10). Perhaps it would be a good idea if we would read the book of Jeremiah and the other books of our wedding guests before we go on to the reception!

Only a little space is given in the Bible to the magnificent culminating event of the marriage supper of the Lamb:

Revelation 19:7-8 (NASB), ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” ⁸ It was given

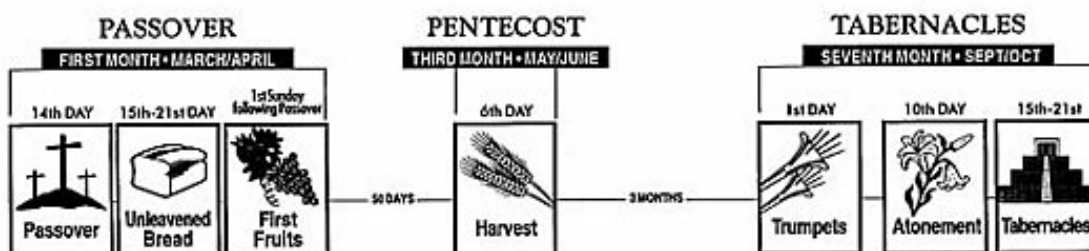
to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

We shall be arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white," which the priest wore in the Tabernacle of old as a sign of their consecration to God. Indeed, we shall be as perfect as Jesus Christ. Our sins were forgiven at the cross, our bad works we're done away with in the Judgment seat, and we are now presented spotless and without blemish to the lamb as a fitting wife. The scripture quoted above is so accurate, utilizing the term "wife" instead of "bride" at this point, since we are then married to the Lord.

We rejoice in being the bride of Christ now, but imagine the joy we will have as the Queen of the Kingdom to come!

After our marriage supper, we shall depart with the Lord to return to this earth in the manner that the bride went to the house prepared for her by the bridegroom. We shall not dwell in His Father's house any longer, but we'll leave heaven to occupy our Kingdom. When we return we shall have our spiritual veils off, and all the world will fully realize who the bride of Christ was and why we acted as we did.

The Christian Meaning Of The Jewish Feasts



FEAST	CHRISTIAN EVENT	KEY CONCEPT
Passover	Crucifixion of Jesus	Justification
Unleavened Bread	Burial of Jesus	Sanctification
First Fruits	Resurrection of Jesus	Glorification
Harvest	Descent of Holy Spirit	Power
Interval of 3 Months	Current Age of the Church	Church Kingdom
Trumpets	Gathering of the Church (?)	Rapture
Day of Atonement	Second Coming of Jesus (?)	Jewish Remnant
Tabernacles	Inauguration of the Millennium	Earthly Kingdom