

Jesus said: But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 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 by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. *1Thes 4:13*

## The Analogy of the Jewish wedding custom

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The first major step in a Jewish marriage was Betrothal. This established the marriage covenant.

- Jesus established an eternal covenant through His blood. His Holy Spirit is the "ring" (if you will) - sealing the bride with a guarantee that He will return for her.  
*Hebrews 13:20, Luke 22:20, \*Ephesians 1:13*

The Jewish bridegroom took the initiative in marriage by leaving his father's house and traveling to the home of the prospective bride.

- So Jesus left His Father's house in heaven and traveled to the earth; the home of His prospective Church (bride) [*John 6:32-33;51*]. Jesus came to earth to obtain the church (bride) through the establishment of a covenant.
- On the same night Jesus made His promise in John 14, He instituted communion. In this communion, he passed the cup of wine to the disciples saying: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." *1 Corinthians 1:25*.

At the home of the prospective bride, the Jewish bridegroom would negotiate with her father to determine the price (mohar) that he must pay to purchase his bride.

- Jesus paid a price to purchase the church (bride). The price He paid was His life blood. *Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

Once the bridegroom paid the purchase price, the marriage covenant was established, and the young man and woman were regarded as husband and wife. From that moment on, the bride was declared to be consecrated or sanctified; set apart exclusively for her bridegroom.

- So the church is said to be sanctified and set apart exclusively for Christ. *Ephesians 5:25-27, 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11, Hebrews 10:10;13:12*

As a symbol of the covenant relationship, the groom and bride would drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction had been pronounced.

- The cup of communion serves as the symbol of the covenant through which Christ has obtained the church (bride). *1 Corinthians 11:25*

After the marriage covenant was established, the groom would leave the bride's home and return to his father's house. There he would remain separate from his bride for a period of 12 months.

- Just as the Jewish groom left the home of his bride and returned to his father's house, so Jesus left the earth, the home of the church (bride) and returned to His Father's house in heaven after He'd established the new covenant and risen from the dead. The church is currently living in this this period of separation awaiting Christ's return. *John 6:62; 20:17*

During this period of separation between the Jewish bride and groom, the bride would use this time to gather her trousseau and prepare for her married life. The groom occupied himself with the preparation of living accommodations in his father's house where he would bring his bride.

- Parallel to the custom of the Jewish groom preparing living accommodations for his bride in his father's house, Christ as been preparing living accommodations for the church in His Father's house in heaven. *John 14:2*

At the end of the period of separation, the groom would come to take his bride to live with him. The taking of the bride usually took place at night.

- So Christ will come to take the church (bride) to live with Him at the end of the separation period. *John 14:3*

The groom, best man and other male escorts would leave the Jewish groom's father's house and conduct a torch light procession to the home of the bride.

- Just as the taking of the Jewish bride was accomplished by a procession of the groom and male escorts from the father's house to the bride's house, so the taking of the church (bride) will be accomplished by a procession of Christ and an angelic escort from heaven to the home of the church. *1 Thessalonians 4:16*

Although the Jewish bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the exact time of his coming.

- So the church (bride) does not know the exact time of Christ's coming for her. *Matthew 25:1-13, Revelation 3:2-3;11*

As a result of the bride not knowing the exact time the groom would come for her, the groom's arrival would be preceded by a shout.

This shout would forewarn the bride to be prepared for the coming of the groom.

So Christ's arrival will be preceded by a shout. *1 Thessalonians 4:16*

After the Jewish groom received his bride together with her female attendants, the enlarged wedding party would return from the bride's home to the groom's father's house.

- Similarly, the church (bride) will return with Christ to His Father's house in heaven after she is taken from the earth to meet Him. *1 Thessalonians 4:17, John 14:2-3*

Upon arrival there, the wedding party would find that the wedding guests had assembled already.

- In the same manner, Christ and the church (bride) will find the soul of Old Testament saints assembled in heaven when they arrive. These souls serve as the wedding guests.

Shortly after arrival, the bride (remaining veiled) and groom would be escorted by the other members of the wedding party to the bridal chamber (huppah)

While the groomsmen and bridesmaids would wait outside, the bride and groom would enter the bridal chamber alone. There in the privacy of that place they would enter into physical union for the first time ~ consummating the marriage that was covenanted earlier.

- Parallel to the custom of the Jewish groom and bride entering into physical union after their arrival and thereby consummating the marriage that was covenanted earlier, Christ and the church (bride) will experience spiritual union after their arrival in heaven; thereby consummating their relationship covenanted earlier.

After the marriage was consummated, the groom would announce the consummation to the other members of the wedding party waiting outside the chamber. These people would in turn pass this news on to the wedding guests.

Upon hearing this good news, the wedding guests would begin the feast and make merry for the next 7 days.

During those 7 days of the wedding festivities (sometimes called "the 7 days of huppah"), the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber.

- In correspondence with the Jewish bride remaining hidden in the bridal chamber for 7 days after arrival at the groom's father's house, the church (bride) will remain hidden for a period of 7 years after arrival in heaven.

While the 7 year tribulation period is taking place on earth, the church will be hidden from the sight of those living on the earth.

At the conclusion of the 7 days, the groom would bring his bride out of the bridal chamber, now with her veil removed, so that all could see who his bride was.

- So Christ will bring the Church (Bride) out of heaven in His second coming at the conclusion of the 7-year tribulation period in full view of all who are alive, so that all can see who the true Church (Bride) is.  
*Colossians 3:4, Jude 14*



***Come, my people, enter your chambers,  
and shut your doors behind you;  
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,  
until the indignation is past.  
For behold, the Lord comes out of His place  
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
the earth will also disclose her blood,  
and will no more cover her slain.***

***Isaiah 26:20***

