

The Marriage of the Lamb

Most believers and students of the Bible have heard of the so-called *Marriage of the Lamb*, and yet it is mentioned directly only once in all of Scripture. That reference is found in Revelation 19:7, where we read:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and given honor unto Him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB is come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Now just reading that single verse doesn't really tell us a great deal about this unusual, indeed even unique, event that is predicted to transpire at some point in the future. Is there more information in the Scriptures on this issue? The answer is yes, and some of it may come as a bit of a shock to many whose particular church affiliation has taught them to think about this forthcoming

occurrence in a certain prescribed manner.

Some of the difficulty in fully understanding this subject stems from a failure to recognize the significance of specific wedding language contained especially in the New Testament, and when I say *wedding language*, I am referring to Jewish marriage customs, particularly those of the first century. The Messiah and some of the apostolic writers as well all make certain references to the forthcoming marriage of the Lamb in terms of the then current Jewish wedding format. It is an amazing revelation to learn how virtually every aspect of this ancient customary practice has a far-deeper spiritual overtone with respect to the prophesied marriage of the Lamb.

The institution of human

marriage was one of the first acts performed by Yahweh after the creation of man. God immediately noted that it was not good that Adam was in a single or alone state, thus another kind of being was made to perfectly complement him, and we read in response to this new set of circumstances the following statements:

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:23-24).

So virtually from the beginning, the subject of marriage became paramount. Why should this be? The answer goes beyond simply the need for human

procreation, or the joy of human marital bliss. There is, in fact, an utterly Divine and spiritual reason behind the creation and institution of marriage, and it has altogether to do with the Creator Himself!

Just as there is a human birth process, so is there a Divine family plan. In fact, the earthly is a type or pattern of the spiritual. The very reason we have physical marriage in the first place has everything to do with the fact that God's objective is to create an eternal family of His own. I suppose a good case could be made that Genesis 1:26 is perhaps *the* definitive Biblical statement in this regard, where God says:

“Let us make man in Our image, after our likeness...And so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him” (Gen. 1:26-27).

This passage really does say it all, and the rest of the Scriptures contain the details of the plan for human beings to become utterly like their Maker. Writing much later, the apostle Paul conveys a beautiful and powerful revelation concerning God's desire for His family, those with whom He intends to share all things. He speaks of His offspring in these glowing terms:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God...The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together...For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren...What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? For He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:14, 16-17, 29, 31-33, 37).

We know from even a cursory reading of the Old Testament that the subject of a Divine marriage is discussed. Yahweh set the stage for what was to come by arranging to call a man named Abraham unto Himself. Abraham's calling was a signal event in human history, because it opened the door to the fulfillment of God's plan for mankind. The patriarch was promised that through his progeny the whole earth would be blessed. To accomplish this great task, God elected to choose the descendants of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, a relatively small, unknown, and otherwise unqualified people to become His own. It is, of course, one of the most awesome stories in all of history. In a graphic description of Yahweh's calling of the people of Israel, the prophet Ezekiel writes the following words of God:

“Thus says the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite. And as for your nativity, in the day you were born your navel was not cut, neither were you washed in water to supple you; you were not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. No eye pitied you, to do any of these unto you, to have compassion upon you; but you were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you...Live...I have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field, and you have increased and waxen great, and you are come to excellent ornaments...Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I swore unto you, and entered into a COVENANT (marriage) with you, says the Lord God, and YOU BECAME MINE. Then I washed you with water; yea...and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with broidered work, and shod you with badgers' skin, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and beautiful crown upon your head. You were decked with gold and

silver...you did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceedingly beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom. And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon you, says the Lord God” (Ezek. 16:3-14).

This highly descriptive language is unquestionably referring to the love between Yahweh and the people of Israel, to His betrothal of her as His wife. Later in this same passage, after a blistering reprimand for Israel’s departure from Him, God describes her actions as those of **“a wife that commits adultery, who takes strangers instead of her husband!” (V. 32).**

When it is stated that a covenant was made between Yahweh and Israel, it is speaking directly of a type of marriage arrangement. When Moses led the people to meet God at Mt Sinai, the terms of that marriage agreement were written on two tables of stone.

History has painfully demonstrated the fact that ancient Israel grossly violated that original marriage covenant repeatedly throughout the ages. Once the United Monarchy dissolved, the northern kingdom was literally given a bill of divorcement by Yahweh. The Scriptures designate, however, that Judah or the southern kingdom was even more evil and whorish than her sister nation.

The question has arisen as to whether or not the marriage arrangement between Yahweh and Israel was ever formally consummated. Historically, a betrothal agreement was first initiated, followed by a period during which the couple is considered married, even though they have not actually gone through the wedding itself, nor have they had any direct contact. Once the marriage is indeed consummated, a new and permanent covenant is issued.

This may be something of a debatable subject. The betrothal agreement could certainly be terminated due to unfaithfulness during that waiting period. This is confirmed in the case of Joseph and Mary in the New Testament. They were betrothed, but had not yet finalized the marriage itself, when it was discovered that Mary was with child. Joseph, it is said, was of a mind to put her away privately, a provision made in the Law for just such a contingency.

There is certainly a future marriage situation that is prophesied in the Old Testament with respect to physical Israel. We read in the book of Hosea about this coming union between Yahweh and Israel. After expressing His anger against the people for their flagrant sins, God says that in the end He will have mercy upon the nation. In chapter 1:10 we read:

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be

measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, You are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel” (Hosea 1:10-11).

“And it shall be at that day, says the Lord, that you shall call me Ishi (my Husband); and shall call me no more Baali (my Lord)...And I will BETROTH you unto Me forever; year, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord” (Hosea 2:16, 19-20).

If the so-called *Old Covenant* was indeed a betrothal agreement, as it certainly appears to have been, then the predicted future covenant that God plans to make with Israel can also be considered as the terms of the coming marriage, for we read in Jeremiah 31:31:

“Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which

My covenant they broke, although I was a HUSBAND unto them, says the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law (terms of the marriage agreement) in their inward parts (not engraved on stone tablets), and write it in their hearts (through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit); and will be their God, and they shall be My people...for I will forgive their iniquity (through the sacrifice of the Messiah, whom they will accept), and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:31-34).

The New Covenant is therefore also a marriage contract, and the language of this passage makes it perfectly clear that everything about this future agreement is spiritual in nature. It will be a different covenant than the one made at Mt Sinai. The terms will be the Laws of God, but not as in the old days wherein the masses did not have those commandments written in their hearts, but rather merely on tables of stone. The marriage arrangement will be made possible by the Holy Spirit which will be poured out upon the people, thus making the essential and critical difference between the old and the new. The true and complete forgiveness of sin, which the Scriptures stipulate can only transpire through the shed blood of Yahshua the Messiah, will be granted unto those Israelites who become bound unto God in this forthcoming marriage.

This future marriage is also discussed in the New Testament, not only in the initial passage which we read from Revelation 19, but in other places as well. There is, in fact, much more wedding language extant in the Scriptures than might meet the eye, and I would like to investigate some of these passages with you. Gaining a fuller understanding of what is actually being said may well alter your view concerning this auspicious occasion.

The apostle Paul has many things to say with regard to the subject of marriage. In one particularly telling passage, he states:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, even as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the Head of the Church...Husbands, love your wives, even as Messiah also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing...For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning MESSIAH AND THE CHURCH” (Eph. 5:22-32).

The language utilized in this passage makes it undeniably clear that Paul is comparing the relationship between a physical

husband and wife to that of Yahshua and the saints. Those who are believers and followers of the Almighty are considered to be in the same type of association with Christ as a wife is supposed to be to her human husband. Not only does He love the Church, but He specifically is sanctifying and washing it, preparing it, so that at the appropriate moment in time it can be presented to Him as a perfect BRIDE.

Once again, Paul writes in his second letter to the church at Corinth about this very special relationship between the Messiah and the Body of believers, saying:

“For I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy: for I have ESPOUSED you to ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST” (II Cor. 11:2).

Note here that the word used to describe the current relationship is *espoused*. To be *espoused* is to be *engaged* in a manner of speaking, but it's really more than that. In God's scheme of things, espousal is that state of absolute agreement between the two parties that they are to be husband and wife. Naturally, it precedes the actual wedding ceremony and the consummation of the marriage itself, but it is so serious an arrangement that, from God's perspective, the two people involved are considered to be joined at that time. This is the state in which Yahweh views His people today—espoused or betrothed unto His Son Yahshua.

Much research has been conducted on the subject of the ancient Jewish wedding pattern, and undoubtedly you have been exposed to some, if not all, of this knowledge. It is really invaluable to understanding some of the Biblical language with regard to the Marriage of the Lamb. Without getting too heavily involved with a lot of detailed information, I would like to share at least a general outline of the types contained within the ancient pattern, and how they relate to the spiritual marriage.

Historically, marriages in Israel were arranged by the parents rather than the children. This was especially true of the father of the groom, who played a very key role in the entire process. In like manner, the Scriptures tell us that our heavenly Father is directly involved in our own calling and choosing. We are told, for instance, by the Messiah Himself that:

“No man can come to Me, except the Father who has sent Me draw him” (Jn. 6:44).

He repeats this truth a few verses later, saying:

“Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father” (v. 65).

Just as the father of the potential groom took the lead in arranging the marriage of his son, so Yahweh is primarily instrumental in choosing those

who will comprise the Messiah’s bride. He is the One who calls human beings and draws them out of darkness into the light of Yahshua.

In the old days, the father in question usually dispatched his most trusted servant to actually accomplish the selection of a bride for his son. In the Godly scheme of things, this would correspond exactly to the role played by the Holy Spirit in our calling. It is that servant of Yahweh that achieves the actual drawing out of a human being unto the Messiah. This can be favorably compared to the manner in which Abraham arranged for the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah. Rather than going himself to where she dwelt, he sent his servant with specific instructions of what to say and do.

Once a specific and appropriate future mate had been selected, the groom-to-be would go to her home. Note carefully that she did not go to where he was. He came to her, and when he came, he did not come empty-handed. No, indeed. He came bearing several very significant items, all of which were a necessary part of the betrothal arrangement. First, he carried with him a *bride price*. That’s right, a bride price. Secondly, he brought a flask of *wine*, which was used to sort of seal the whole thing. And finally, he carried with him a certain document—a certificate or *agreement of betrothal*.

Now, in light of the Scriptures and the fact that the

Messiah is the true spiritual bridegroom, what do we see? First of all, the prospective husband brings the bride price. In the case of Yahshua’s bride, we read the following:

“Know you not that your bodies are the members of Messiah? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! What? Know you not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For two, says He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit...Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN? For YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:15-20).

Indeed, the price for Yahshua’s Bride is extraordinarily high, in fact, incalculably great, because it was and is His very own life itself. Think about the fact that our entry into the family of God is described in terms of being purchased or bought, not in just one place, but in several New Testament passages. For instance, we read Paul’s words again, this time in Acts 20:28, where he states:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He has

PURCHASED with His own BLOOD.

And the apostle Peter also who says in verse 18 of his first epistle:

“Forasmuch as you know that you were not REDEEMED with corruptible things, such as silver and gold...but with the precious BLOOD of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Pet. 1:18-19).

And finally John, writing in the book of Revelation, make the following statement:

“And when He (Messiah) had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders feel down before the Lamb...And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have REDEEMED us to God by Your BLOOD, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God both priests and kings; and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:8-10).

Note carefully the key words in these passages—**PURCHASED, BOUGHT, PRICE, REDEEMED!** This not coincidental, but concrete proof that what is being discussed with respect to the people of Yahweh, the body of true believers upon the earth, is that they, like the young woman who in the process of being wooed by her suitor is presented

with a bride price, are also being purchased by God as a wife for His beloved Son! This is precisely why these key words are utilized in connection with the sacrificial blood of Yahshua. It is a literal Bride purchase that is being accomplished.

If you recall, the prospective groom not only brings with him the bride price, but also a flask of wine. This is drunk by the two parties to symbolize the ratification of the betrothal arrangement. Even though the marriage is, by our standards, a sort of pre-arranged affair, the bride-to-be has the right of choice. Once she is presented to the man and has examined the bride price and the offer of marriage, she can either accept or reject the proposal. When and if she accepts, then, in a manner of speaking, the deal is done, and wine is drunk in honor of the covenant that has been made.

As you can easily discern, the elements involved in our calling follow this part of the marriage pattern perfectly once again. Each one of us, when confronted by the drawing of God’s Spirit, has the right and the responsibility to make the choice of whether or not we desire to respond to the Divine calling we have received. We have to agree with the arrangement that is being offered. We have to either accept or reject the proposal, and in so doing, either accept or reject Yahshua as Savior and Lord and Husband.

In addition, wine also plays a particularly significant role with respect to this initial stage of our calling, because it symbolizes the blood of Messiah that was shed for us. Remember that at Christ’s Last Supper it is stated:

“And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My BLOOD of the NEW COVENANT, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:27-28).

In a manner of speaking, therefore, every time that we partake of the bread and wine, we are, in effect, remembering, honoring, and renewing the very vows of the betrothal covenant that has been made between the Messiah and us, His espoused Bride! And, it goes virtually without saying, that the bride price and the wine that form the initial aspects of the ancient marriage arrangement are so directly and obviously connected to the time of Passover in the annual festival scheme of things. In fact, it is so remarkable how God has designed the entire holyday pattern to follow the consecutive steps of the ancient marriage ritual, beginning with Passover and going right on through the Feast of Tabernacles, as we shall soon see.

In addition to the bride price and wine, the prospective groom also brought with him the certificate of betrothal. Remember that agreeing to an espoused condition was tantamount to being recognized as married. The

betrothed partners were bound to remain chaste virgins until the day they actually consummated their wedding vows, an event that always came later, after the elapsing of a special period of time during which both parties had very specific responsibilities to fulfil before the wedding itself.

The betrothal agreement was a covenant in every respect, with the two people involved being made completely aware of what was required of them, and, of course, pledging themselves to abide by the terms of the certificate. With respect to the annual festival plan, the day of Pentecost is most closely associated with the act of espousal. This is based upon the strong likelihood that the Torah was given to Moses and the children of Israel at the season that would later become known as Pentecost, the 50th day after their departure from Egypt. The Law was incorporated into what we generally call the Old Covenant, and, in fact, served as the terms and requirements of that ancient agreement. It was, therefore, a betrothal agreement in very fact between Yahweh and the children of Israel. From that point in time, they were considered to be married, even as an espoused couple, such as Mary and Joseph, were viewed in the same light by the people of their day.

Truly called believers on the spiritual plane also have a marriage covenant. Yahshua the Messiah plainly stated that He was the messenger of the so-called New Covenant, signed and sealed

in His very own blood. The New Covenant, like all covenants, has its own terms and requirements, which, quite frankly, can be summed up into one very encompassing and very powerful statement uttered by Christ at the time of His famous temptation in the wilderness, when He said:

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

The terms of the believer’s marriage covenant are the Laws of the Almighty written upon the heart by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, so that the genuine deepest intent of the commandments can be lived out in the individual’s life—thought, word, and action. Nothing less than this high Godly standard is permitted under the agreement into which we, as believers, have entered.

Once the betrothal had transpired, something very unusual occurred, at least to the modern western mind. Instead of rushing off to *get married*, as would be the custom today, there was an imposed indefinite waiting period. Though having come to his prospective bride with the proposal of marriage, the groom-to-be did not remain at her home. Rather, he departed, and, in fact, was not seen again until he returned to take his new wife unto himself.

During this period of separation, both the man and woman involved busied themselves with their part in the necessary

preparations for the forthcoming wedding and marriage. The wife-to-be focused upon readying herself for wedded life, while the future husband went back to his father’s home, and commenced constructing a wedding chamber that was literally a part of the house itself. The idea was, of course, that once the project, which was, by the way, supervised by the groom’s father, had been completed, and passed inspection, then the actual wedding plans could proceed forthwith.

Now, let’s consider how perfectly this part of the ancient wedding pattern fits the Biblical outline of what will transpire with regard to the marriage of the Lamb. When the Messiah made His miraculous appearance on the earth, one of the chief purposes was to become the ultimate Groom and go through the process which we are covering in this message. Up until this point, Yahshua has fulfilled each aspect precisely. Absolutely nothing will alter that procedure when we look at the portion we just finished discussing.

The betrothal covenant was brought to mankind by the Messiah. Just as ancient Israel was espoused at Mt Sinai, so it became possible for spiritual believers to become betrothed to Christ some 1500 years later on the day of Pentecost 30 A.D., when the Holy Spirit was poured out in that upper room in Jerusalem. Once the initial parts of the marriage arrangement had been fulfilled, what happened? Yahshua did not remain physically with His bride-

to-be. Just like the prospective groom in the wedding scenario, He departed. To His early disciples, Christ said:

“You have heard how I said unto you, I GO AWAY, and then I will come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I GO UNTO THE FATHER: for My Father is greater than I...But now I go My way to Him that sent Me...But because I have said these things unto you, SORROW has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient (*to your advantage or profit*) for you that I go away...A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and YOU SHALL SEE ME, because I go to the Father” (Jn. 14:28, 16:5-7, 16).

You will notice that at the very end of His human life, the Savior is most concerned about those He is leaving behind, and especially that they love Him and expectantly and faithfully wait for Him. In this long discourse on the occasion of the Last Supper, recorded in John 14-17, Yahshua speaks often about the subject of love, saying:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments...he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him...Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not at the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid...As the Father has love

Me, so have I loved you: continue you in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love...These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (Jn. 14:15, 21, 27, 15:9-11).

Note carefully how protective the Messiah feels toward these disciples, how He seeks to comfort them, because He must leave them for a while and return unto His Father. He is so concerned that they not sorrow or be afraid, that they have joy and peace and patience and endurance until He returns.

In John 17, we have recorded the special prayer that Christ prayed with the apostles at that final meal before His death. Interestingly, the main point He makes is the special relationship between Him and those who have committed themselves to Him, especially the ONENESS that has been achieved. This is such appropriate wedding language, for God had said from the beginning that a man and woman should become one flesh, even as Yahshua desires that He and His followers become one Spirit.

Not only is the ultimate Groom departing from His betrothed bride, but He is specifically going back to His Father, precisely as the human husband-to-be returns to his father for a period of time. Note Christ’s words to this effect in John 14:1-3:

“Do not let your hearts be distressed. You believe in God, believe and trust in Me also. In MY FATHER’S HOUSE there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you, for I am going to PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. And when I go and make ready a place for you, I will COME BACK again, and will TAKE YOU TO MYSELF, that where I am you may be also.”

This is some of the most descriptive language in the Bible, and it is based totally on the extant wedding pattern of that ancient time. Here Messiah is the betrothed groom seeking to comfort His espoused bride as He is about to leave her and return to His Father house. Just like his human counterpart, He is departing specifically so that He can prepare a place for His new bride. That place is the wedding or bridal chamber that was always in the house of the groom’s father. Then note how He emphasizes the certainty of His return. He wants to fully assure His bride that He is coming back for her, and when He does, He promises to receive her unto Himself, and take her to the place that He has prepared.

It is so interesting to note that in the ancient wedding arrangement, the groom actually did not know when his wedding day would be. This was something known only to his father, who, upon overseeing the establishment of his son’s bridal chamber and the finished project meeting his approval, would then give the word

for the approaching wedding to take place. Believe it or not, even the common saying of the day, if one should ask a betrothed husband when he was to be married, he would actually respond with these words: **“That day and hour is known only to my father!”** How remarkable that Yahshua said the identical thing when He was asked about the time of His return to the earth (Matt. 24:36).

As you well know, there is within the sacred annual holyday pattern a lengthy period of time between Pentecost and the fall festival season. That time span covers the long hot days of summer, and is, in effect, something of a trial, as believers must wait patiently until the coming of the seventh month and all that it holds. This corresponds perfectly to that period when the groom has left his espoused bride and gone back to his father’s house. The fall festivals, therefore, look forward to the Messiah’s return for His bride.

The pattern then is that in the first month the prospective groom comes to the woman that has been chosen for Him. He presents her with the bride price and the wine, thus connecting this activity with the Passover. In the third month, Pentecost relates expressly to the actual time of betrothal, to the covenant between the two parties, and the agreement to which they come. Then the long wait as the bride prepares herself for marriage and the groom prepares a place for the wedding to

be held in his father’s house. And finally, in the seventh month comes the holydays of Trumpets, Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles, all of which correspond to the final stages in the unfolding wedding plan. Those steps include the return of the groom to fetch his bride, the wedding itself and the consummation of the marriage, followed, as custom dictated, by the wedding supper or feast.

Now we come to one of the really glorious, yet most challenging and perhaps somewhat controversial portions of this entire discussion. The marriage of the Lamb, as I stated at the beginning of this message, is mentioned outright by name only one place in Scripture, and that is Revelation 19:7. There are, however, additional passages elsewhere that help fill in the otherwise missing pieces of the puzzle. One such reference is found in the parable of Matthew 22:2, where we read:

“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a MARRIAGE for his SON. And sent forth his servants to call them which were bidden to the WEDDING...Tell them who are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: come unto the MARRIAGE...And when the KING CAME IN TO SEE THE GUESTS, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how come you in hither without a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to

his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:2-14).

This passage is one of the *Kingdom* parables, and it refers to the coming Marriage of the Lamb. The king is the father of the one who is getting marriage, and, in terms of the spiritual Kingdom, he is representative of Yahweh the Father. Note that it is the Father who clearly takes the lead in hosting this great event on behalf of His Son.

Now consider this next point very carefully in your mind. This parable establishes that, not only is the King and Father the one who is in charge of this wedding for His Son, **HE IS ALSO PRESENT AT THE MARRIAGE!** I do not know how this fact strikes you, but it ought to give you pause for serious thought. The marriage of the Lamb is shown in Scripture to transpire at the end of this age, just prior to the onset of the Messiah’s millennial reign. We know this not only from the aforementioned passage in Revelation 19:7, but also from the famous parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. There we read:

“Then shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the BRIDEGROOM...And at MIDNIGHT there was a CRY made, Behold, the bridegroom

comes; go you out to meet him...And while they (the five foolish virgins) went to buy oil, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the MARRIAGE; and the door was shut...Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the SON OF MAN COMES" (Matt. 25:1-13).

This is obviously well before the time described in the Bible as the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev. 21). It is then that we are told that God the Father will come down to the earth and dwell there, not prior to this. Therefore we are forced to come to terms with the fact that the Father is present at the marriage of Yahshua which is set *before* the millennium, and yet does not descend to the earth until *after* the millennium. Please keep this in mind as we continue our discussion.

Before we move on, let's notice a couple of easily overlooked points from the parable of the ten virgins. First of all, the bridegroom, who is of course the Messiah, comes for His bride at night. Remarkably this was the exact custom of the ancient marriage pattern. In fact, midnight was the usual and accepted timing for this joyous occurrence. The returning groom came at a time unknown to the bride, even as the ten virgins were unaware of the precise moment. This correlates perfectly with the teaching of the Messiah, as well as the apostles, that true believers should always be ready, for none of them knows

the day or hour of the Second Coming of Christ. And finally, the return of the groom was always accomplished with a loud shout, which, of course, we see clearly demonstrated in the parable of the ten virgins. Remember that Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 4:16 that Yahshua will come back to the earth with the shout of the archangel! So, even in the smallest and seemingly least details, the Marriage of the Lamb corresponds perfectly and remarkably with the ancient wedding patterns.

In yet another amazing correlation, it was usually customary in ancient times for their to be witnesses who would go before the returning groom, in a sense preparing the way for him—interestingly enough, **TWO WITNESSES!** That should strike a responsive chord with most of us, because the Bible reveals that there will indeed be *two witnesses* who precede the Second Coming of the Messiah, as recorded in Revelation 11.

As we all should realize, there are innumerable important lessons that can be derived from the events and experiences of ancient Israel. Paul expressly teaches in I Corinthians 10 that what happened to them is recorded in the Scriptures for examples or patterns from which we are to learn and grow. In other words, there almost always spiritual overtones to the things we read about in Israel's history. And this is true even of the Marriage of the Lamb.

In addition to the encounter that the people had with Yahweh at Mt Sinai, when He made a betrothal covenant with them, it is also instructive to note that this event transpired *before* they actually entered the Promised Land, not afterward. You have to wonder if this does not give us a strong clue as to the timing of the future Marriage of the Lamb. If the typical marriage occurred before Israel went into Canaan, is it not possible that the spiritual marriage will also take place prior to the official onset of the Kingdom of God on the earth? Quite frankly, I would think so.

The typical understanding among most of the churches of God is that the Marriage of the Lamb occurs on the earth at some point after the Messiah has returned. I would submit to you, however, that such a contention carries with it a number of inherent problems. I hinted earlier about one such difficulty, and it has to do with the fact that Yahweh, as the Father of the Groom, not only is responsible for the arranging the marriage of His Son, but will also, in fact, be present with it transpires! If you will recall, I asked you to be thinking about this reality.

If the coming spiritual marriage were to take place on the earth as is customarily assumed, and it is to occur just after the return of Christ, then are we to believe that the Father Himself will actually come down to the earth to participate in the wedding of His Son? If we say no, then we do

certain violence to the Scriptures, not to mention basic good sense and decency, for what loving father would not attend his beloved son's marriage?

If we say yes, then we are faced with the problem that the Bible simply does not allow for Yahweh to descend to the earth prior to that designated time after the millennial reign of the Messiah, as recorded in Revelation 21, the time of the New Heavens and the New Earth.

Is there a way of looking at this entire unfolding event that would solve this dilemma? I believe there is. Remember that in the Old Testament, there are many types and patterns of things to come. This is especially so with respect to the experiences of ancient Israel. When they met Yahweh at Mt Sinai, something powerful and unspeakably significant occurred. Notice the following:

“And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud...And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God...And Mt Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire...and the whole Mount quaked greatly...And the Lord called Moses UP TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNT: AND MOSES WENT UP” (Ex. 19:16-20).

Not only was this one of the most spectacular historical events ever, but remember that it also speaks to other things in the Spirit that we must discern. This betrothal of Israel took place at Mt Sinai. What therefore does this sacred mountain represent to you and me as believers today? Paul answers that question in this manner by saying:

“For you (believers today) are not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, not unto blackness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and voice of words...But you are come to MT ZION (not the physical Mt Sinai), and unto the city of the Living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM (not the physical Jerusalem), and to an innumerable company of angels, to the GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in HEAVEN, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Yahshua the Mediator of the New Covenant (marriage agreement), and to the blood of sprinkling...See that you refuse Him not that speaks from heaven” (Heb. 12:18-25).

Mt Sinai in Arabia corresponds to Mt Zion, the place of Yahweh's great city and throne. Physical Jerusalem relates to the heavenly Jerusalem. Indeed all these figures mentioned in this passage are of a heavenly nature. Writing to the Galatians, Paul elaborates further by saying:

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from Mt Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mt Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is ABOVE is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:22-26).

In other words, whereas the Old Covenant related to ancient Israel, the church in the wilderness, and constituted the terms of the physical marriage between Yahweh and the nation; the New Covenant is connected with things eternal, to heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of the firstborn, heavenly Mt Zion, and the great Marriage of the Lamb to come. The New Covenant or New Marriage Contract thus corresponds to things of a HEAVENLY NATURE!

So when Moses, as the representative of Israel, went up to the top of Mt Sinai, ascending into the literal presence of God, and receiving the terms of the Old Covenant, Israel became betrothed to Yahweh. Could Moses have been a type or pattern of believers and followers of the Messiah, who, in order to be married unto Yahshua will, in like manner, also ascend, not up to the top of physical Mt Sinai, but to heavenly

Mt Zion, to heavenly Jerusalem, to the very site of God's House, the one in which there are many rooms, the location of that special place Christ promised He was going to prepare for those who would constitute His Bride, and for whom He pledged to return, and there in the presence of the Father Himself, be married unto Yahshua the Messiah? Moses had to leave the camp and go up to the top of the Mount in order to see God. Must we also **GO UP?!!!**

Direct your attention for a moment on the heavenly scene described in the book of Revelation, where the apostle John saw incredible things upon which he reported. In chapter 4:2, we read:

“And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set IN HEAVEN, and One sat on the throne...and out of the throne proceeded LIGHTNINGS AND THUNDERS AND VOICES: and there were seven lamps of FIRE burning before the throne” (Rev. 4:2, 5).

Remember that at Mt Sinai, there was great thunder and lightning. But also there was the voice of the trumpet. In the same 4th chapter of Revelation, we read:

“After this, I looked and behold, a door was opened in HEAVEN: and the first VOICE which I heard was as it were of a TRUMPET talking with me; which said, COME UP hither, and I will show you things that must be hereafter” (Rev. 4:1).

You will note that John saw seven lamps of fire before the throne of God in heaven. What exactly do those lamps represent? In this same book of Revelation, we read of another seven lights. Notice Revelation 1:20:

“The mystery fo the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS. The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which you saw are THE SEVEN CHURCHES.”

So in chapter 1, we have seven candlesticks before the throne, and in chapter 4, we have seven lamps before the throne. Now we know for certain that the seven candlesticks represent the true Assembly or Church of God. Could the seven lamps in chapter 4 also be a description or reference to the saints, and that they are indeed present at some future point before Yahweh's throne in heaven?

In the prophecy of Zechariah 4, we read a passage that has what appears to be a direct bearing on these verses in Revelation. Please notice:

“And the angle that talked with me came again, and wakened me, as a man that is wakened out of sleep. And said unto me, What do you see? And I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his S E V E N L A M P S THEREON...and the TWO

OLIVE TREES by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof” (Zech. 4:1-3).

Does this scene not sound familiar? Here is the identical set-up that we see characterized by John in the book of Revelation, including even the two olive trees of which it is written in the 11th chapter:

“And I will give power to My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1260 days...These are the TWO OLIVE TREES...standing before the God of the earth...And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified...And after three and a half days the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice FROM HEAVEN saying unto them, COME UP HITHER. And they ascended UP TO HEAVEN in a cloud” (Rev. 11:3-4, 7-11).

Here is a direct quotation from the Bible stating that these two witnesses, whoever or whatever they may be, are raised from the dead and commanded to come up to the very heaven of God's throne! Next, notice the

verses that immediately follow John's record of this auspicious event:

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the 10th part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were afraid...And the SEVENTH ANGEL sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord God and of His Messiah; and He shall reign forever and ever...And the temple of God was opened IN HEAVEN, and there was seen in His Temple the ark of His testament; and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings and an earthquake and great hail” (Rev. 11:13-19).

So these two witnesses are resurrected and ascend into heaven at the time of seventh trumpet. This is not yet at the very end of the age, for the Scriptures in the book of Revelation go on to describe still more devastating events that are to transpire upon the earth before the conclusion of all things. The timing is, however, very near the end.

The well known passage in I Thessalonians 4:16 that speaks of the resurrection of the dead saints and the changing of those who are alive at that time, has them all rising up into the clouds to meet Yahshua. Notice that this verse does not say that the Messiah actually comes to the earth, but that the saints go up to meet Him.

It has been merely an assumption on the part of many preachers and teachers that the saints rise up to meet Messiah and then come back down to the earth in Jerusalem, but that is not what this passage states. It simply says that we will rise into the clouds and before forever with the Lord. And what the book of Revelation is revealing could well lead us to another conclusion.

I have already quoted several verses from Revelation 4, but I left one out—on purpose—verse 6. The context is the graphic description of Yahweh's throne in heaven. It reads as follows:

“Before the throne there was a SEA OF GLASS like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creature full of eyes before and behind.”

What about this *Sea of Glass*? Where and how does it fit into the future of God's people? In Revelation 15, the time-setting is just before the final plagues are to be poured out upon the earth. Verse 1 states that these last calamities fill up the wrath of God against unrepentant mankind. The time-frame, therefore, is very near the end of this present age. Now notice verse 2:

“And I saw, as it were, a SEA OF GLASS mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast...STAND ON A SEA OF GLASS, having the harps of God.”

Do you catch the powerful significance of this passage? The Scriptures are telling us that at some point prior to the onset of the final plagues, including the infamous battle of Armageddon, there are resurrected saints standing on the Sea of Glass before the throne of God! We know that chapter 15 is discussing heavenly things. John expressly says so. In verse 5, the Temple in heaven is mentioned, and in verse 7, the four living creatures are present, and finally, in verse 8 we read:

“And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and NO MAN was able to enter into the Temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”

Although the direction of this message may be going against what you have been taught or come to assume about these end-time events, the testimony of the Scriptures is there for all to read. Is it possible that the resurrected saints will rise up into the clouds and go with the Messiah to heaven? After all, Yahshua did say that He was going back to His Father's house, and that certainly would be in heaven. He also said that when He went back He would prepare a place for us. It only stands to reason that such a place would be in His Father's house in heaven. As we have seen clearly seen, this action corresponds perfectly with the ancient wedding pattern, as the groom goes back home and prepares the place where he will eventually take his bride, once he has returned to fetch her.

Why go to heaven? A couple of reasons. First of all, there is absolute bedlam on the earth, and it is about to be virtually destroyed in the great holocaust the world has ever experienced. We read in Isaiah 26, where it is said:

“Your dead shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. Come, My people, enter you into your CHAMBERS (bridal suite), and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord will come out of HIS PLACE to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain” (Isa. 26:19-21).

Secondly, there is a marriage of the Lamb that is scheduled to transpire, and what better possible setting could there be than in the very house of Yahshua’s Father (He is our Father too!)? David writes so beautifully in Psalms 19 the following description:

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night the show forth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is

gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle (tent or canopy) for the sun (type of Messiah), which is as a BRIDEGROOM coming out of his CHAMBER (bridal suite, same word as in Isa. 26:20), and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it” (Psa. 19:1-6).

Remarkably, God has designed even the heavens themselves as a kind of bridal chamber for the sun, which typifies Yahshua the Messiah. In other words, whenever we see the sun rising each morning and moving through the heavens each day, it is representative of our Savior coming out of His bridal chamber, as indeed He will do at the conclusion of the forthcoming Marriage of the Lamb!

Finally, we come to Revelation 19, where the actual marriage of the Lamb is mentioned by name. Keeping everything we have covered thus far clearly in mind, notice precisely what is revealed here:

“And after these things (seven last plagues, among others), I heard the voice of MUCH PEOPLE IN HEAVEN, saying, Hallelujah, Salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God...Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him; for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HAS MADE

HERSELF READY. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE: for fine linen is the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SAINTS. And he said unto me, Blessed are they who are called unto the MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB...And I saw HEAVEN opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. His eyes were as flames of fire, and on His head were many crowns...And His name is called the Word of God. And the ARMIES which were in HEAVEN followed Him upon white horses, clothed in FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, and that with it He should smite the nations; and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God...And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and the armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against HIS ARMY. And the beast...and...false prophet...These were both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19).

So what we have is: The Bible telling us in Revelation 11 that the two witnesses ascend up to heaven; in chapter 15 that the resurrected saints are to stand on the Sea of Glass before the throne of God in heaven (in fact, chapter 14 begins with the 144,000 standing with Christ on the same

Sea of Glass); and in chapter 19 that the marriage of the Lamb occurs in heaven, and that the great army which accompanies the Messiah upon His literal return to put down the final rebellion of mankind is described in identical terms to that of the saints, clothed in fine linen, clean and white! I would submit to you that these are some remarkable revelations!

Now, notice the next two references. The first one is in the book of Jude:

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds” (Jude 14-15).

And the second passage from the Old Testament prophet Zechariah:

“And His (Messiah) feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley...And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains...Yea, you shall flee like as you fled from before the earthquake in the day of Uzziah, king of Judah; and my God shall come, and ALL THE SAINTS WITH HIM” (Zech. 14:4-5).

I do n't know about you,

but I personally think that it is an exciting and awesome possibility that the saints will rise from the earth into heaven and actually be in the presence of the Father and Son in their very heavenly abode for the great Marriage of the Lamb. The apostle Paul, again writing in I Thessalonians, states:

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men...to the end that He may establish your heart blameless in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Yahshua Messiah WITH ALL HIS SAINTS” (I Thess. 3:12-13).

The long wait between Pentecost and the fall festival season each year is typical of the waiting period that the betrothed bride had to endure while her espoused husband was away preparing a place in his father's house for their actual wedding. As we just read, Revelation 19 speaks of the Bride of Messiah making herself ready, and this is precisely the responsibility that each true believer has during the time of his or her calling in this physical life. Everything we go through is or should be preparation for that great and marvelous day when the Father will say to His Son, *Now is the time. Go and fetch your Bride!*

If Pentecost can be seen as representative of betrothal, then certainly the fall festivals, all of which are contained within the seventh month, speak of the time when the Messiah will come for

His Bride, the actual wedding and consummation of the union, and the marriage feast that always followed.

These steps can be perceived as being pictured by the Day of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Trumpets would then signal the time of resurrection and change, as the Groom returns for His Bride, for we are told plainly that at the *last trump* the dead in Christ shall arise, and those who are alive will be changed. The Day of Atonement would then typify the conclusion of the wedding period, and the exit of the Bride and Groom from the Father's house. This would mark the great Second Coming of Yahshua with all the saints, for it is said in Joel 2:15:

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a FAST, call a SOLEMN ASSEMBLY: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children...let the BRIDEGROOM go forth out of His CHAMBER, and the BRIDE out of her closet...And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh...and I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke” (Joel 2:15-16, 28, 30).

And finally, the Feast of Tabernacles would be symbolic of the wedding celebration. It is quite interesting that we traditionally call Tabernacles simply *the Feast*.

It has been known as such for thousands of years. Even the Bible refers on occasion to it in this fashion. And the very nature of the Feast of Tabernacles strongly suggests its relationship to that deliriously joyous time when the Kingdom of God is fully established upon the earth, and the Spirit poured out upon all flesh!

With respect to those who will be a part of the Bride, the prophet Isaiah records the eloquent words which Yahshua spoke in reference to Himself, saying:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings (gospel) unto the meek; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Jubilee), and the day of vengeance of our God (end-time cataclysms); to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified...You shall be named Priests of the Lord, men shall call you the Ministers of our God...For your shame you shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion...I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has

clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a BRIDEGROOM decks himself with ornament, and as a BRIDE adorns herself with jewels...And you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God...For as the BRIDEGROOM REJOICES OVER HIS BRIDE, so shall your God rejoice over you...Behold, the Lord has proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. And they shall call them the Holy People, the redeemed of Yahweh” (Isa. 61-62).

Although this subject has so many more aspects for which there is no time to cover on this tape, I do hope that this brief overview has been of value to you, and that it will stimulate you to study, pray, and meditate more than ever on the coming Marriage of the Lamb, your personal part in it, and the all-important preparation that must precede it. If you are interested in more detail, I would recommend that you consult the work of such Hebraic scholars and writers as Eddie Chumney, Joe Good, Avi ben Mordecai, Zola Levitt, and my good friend, Dean Wheelock of *Hebrew Roots*. Excellent material from all these researchers can easily be found on the Internet by simply typing in the name of the individual.