

## The Wedding Pattern

The Lord gave Israel seven feasts in Leviticus 23. The Lord refers to the feasts as appointed times (*mowed* – Strong’s H4150). *Mowed* means an appointed time, a specific time. Our Heavenly Father knows the End from the Beginning, and the seven *specific appointed times* of the seven feasts give us an outline of His overall plan and I believe that some appointed times have been, and all will be prophetically fulfilled.

Within the Word of God is the pattern of the Church as the Bride of Christ (hereafter noted as **Church**) being wed to Jesus, and it is preserved to this day in the practice of the traditional Jewish wedding (hereafter noted as **Jewish Wedding**). This is not to say that the Church has replaced Israel in the Lord’s plan; quite the opposite. Please see Romans 11:11-18, and 11:25-26. Elements of the Jewish wedding are found in the entire Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament.

Also, the Lord’s plan includes choosing a people that would be His bride, His wife. Several times in the Old Testament the Lord describes Israel as His wife. It all began when the Lord chose Abraham and promised him that his descendants would be a great and numerous people. But at Mount Sinai the chosen wife became adulterous and worshipped the Golden Calf. Time and again, through the prophets, the Lord called for Israel to return to Him.

Finally, the Lord told Israel,

“I am sought of [them that] asked not [for me]; I am found of [them that] sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation [that] was not called by my name.” (Isaiah 65:1)

Praise His name, the Lord turned to the Gentiles. In the New Testament the Church, composed of Gentiles and Jews, is also described as the Bride of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord gave the Children of Israel three Spring Feasts in Leviticus 23:4-14, **Passover**, **Unleavened Bread** and **Firstfruits**. Here is how they were fulfilled:

**Passover** - Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the Cross. Jesus was the Lamb of God. (John 1:29) Jesus was the Passover Lamb.

**Firstfruits** - The day we recognize as Resurrection Sunday is the Jewish Feast of Firstfruits. Jesus was the Firstfruits of the grave. (First Corinthians 15:20)

**Unleavened Bread** - According to Scripture, “Passover Week” is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leavening is figurative of sin; Jesus was “unleavened,” without sin. Jesus paid the price at the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

There is a thread of continuity that flows through the seven feasts, or appointed times, first given by the Lord. Here are the steps taken in completing the Jewish wedding and its application to the wedding of the Church to the Lord Jesus, followed by how this ties to the seven appointed feasts of Israel:

The steps of the traditional Jewish wedding:

1 – Selection of the Bride

**Jewish Wedding** - The Son chooses the Bride – the Father makes the arrangements

**Church** - John 15:16 – “You did not choose Me, but I chose you . . .”

2 – The Bride Price established

**Jewish Wedding** - The father of the bride must be reimbursed for the loss of his daughter.

**Church** - I Corinthians 6:20 - “For you were bought with a price.” The Bride price was paid when Jesus died on the Cross.

We who are saved by Jesus were chosen by the Lord. (Isaiah 65:1) Jesus paid the price on Passover. The *appointed times* of Firstfruits and Unleavened Bread complete the picture of Jesus being resurrected and being sinless, the spotless Lamb of God.

The Spring Feasts have all been fulfilled.

**Pentecost**, or the Feast of Weeks, was the fourth *appointed time* given by the Lord in Leviticus 23:15-22.

Each year at Pentecost, Jewish synagogues read the entire Book of Ruth. The story of Ruth takes place at the wheat harvest, or Pentecost. This book is a picture of the Lord Jesus and His Gentile bride. Boaz was the kinsman-redeemer. Jesus is our Redeemer. Ruth was a Moabitess, a Gentile. The Church is the Gentile Bride. That very day, the Day of Pentecost, Boaz redeemed Ruth. The marriage is not mentioned, only the commitment, the betrothal, is recorded. The marriage of Boaz and Ruth is noted in conclusion, but not discussed.

Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley. A measure of barley was a day's wages. (Revelation 6:6). I think this is a picture of mankind being paid for six millennial days' work. The Bride, or the Church, will not have to work after six millennial days or six thousand years. According to Biblical chronology, it has been about six thousand years.

The six measures of barley were also part of the traditional Jewish wedding Bride price. Boaz said, “Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.”

First Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

At the Feast of Pentecost the Bride of Christ was given the Gift of the Holy Spirit and through this Jesus committed to complete the betrothal of the Church when He comes again.

Ephesians 1:13-14 “in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The steps of the traditional Jewish wedding:

### 3 – The Betrothal

**Jewish Wedding** - More than mere “engagement”, it was a permanent arrangement. Recall the story of Joseph and Mary.

**Church** – The attachment of the Church to the Lord is also permanent, and forever. “This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” (John 6:58) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

### 4 – The Marriage Contract

**Jewish Wedding** – A written agreement committing each party to the marriage.

**Church** - The entire Holy Bible is our written agreement containing the promises of God. Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed;” (John 8:31)

### 5 – The Bride must consent

**Jewish Wedding** – This is not entirely an arranged marriage; the bride must agree.

**Church** – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” (Mark 16:16) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

### 6 – The Bridal Gift and the Cup of the Covenant

**Jewish Wedding** – A glass of wine is taken upon the signing of the contract.

**Church** – Each time we gather around the Lord’s Table, we remember the “contract.” “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:27-28)

**Jewish Wedding** – The Bride is given a gift by the groom.

**Church** - The Holy Spirit is given by Jesus — “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38) This, of course, occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

The Feast of Pentecost has been fulfilled.

The next *appointed time* is the **Feast of Trumpets**. The Feast of Trumpets is a mysterious time. Of all the feasts, or *appointed times*, little is said of it and no scriptural reason for the feast is given. (see Leviticus 23:23-25) A trumpet (the Shofar) is blown. It appears that the Feast of Trumpets will be the next feast fulfilled when the Groom, the Lord Jesus, comes for His Bride, the Church.

The steps of the traditional Jewish wedding:

7 – The Ceremonial Purification of the Bride

**Jewish Wedding** - The next step for the Bride after she is betrothed is a ceremonial cleansing. In Biblical times the Bride would use a *Mikvah*, which was pool of water, in which she would immerse herself.

**Church** - Acts 2:41 – “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized (immersed); and that day about three thousand souls were added [to them].”

8 – The Groom would prepare a room for the Bride in his father’s house

**Jewish Wedding** – In Biblical times the groom would add a room to his father’s house. At that time, families lived together.

**Church** - John 14:3 – “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 to Myself.”

The father of the groom determines when the room is ready. The groom does not determine the time of the wedding. “But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” (Matthew 24:36)

Let me insert an additional hope at this point. When the Lord Jesus comes for His Bride, the Church, we will not be totally surprised. Although the Jewish bride did not know the day or the hour, she was expectant. The Apostle Paul in speaking of “that Day” said, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.” (First Thessalonians 5:4-5) Today, many in the Church are expectant and will not be totally surprised.

The steps of the traditional Jewish wedding:

9 – The Bride is consecrated and set apart

**Jewish Wedding** – The Bride is spoken for and belongs to no one else. Again, refer to Mary and Joseph. (Matthew 1:18-19)

**Church** - First Peter 2:9 – “But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.”

At this point in the process, the Bride is always in readiness. She does not know when the Groom will return for her. See Matthew 25 – The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

10 – The Groom returns with a shout, “Behold, the bridegroom comes!”

**Jewish Wedding** – This was frequently done at midnight for surprise. Matthew 25:6 (the Parable of the Ten Virgins) – “And at midnight a cry (shout) was [heard]: ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!’”

**Church** - First Thessalonians 4:16 – “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”

11 – The Bride and Groom go to the wedding chamber.

**Jewish Wedding** - The marriage was consummated in the wedding chamber. The Bride and Groom stayed in that wedding chamber for seven days.

Scripture tells us that a prophetic day can equal a year. Numbers 14:34 – “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities.” The seven days in the wedding chamber appear to equate to seven prophetic years, which parallels the last seven years of Daniel’s prophecy, and is the basis for the concept of seven years of Tribulation. “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” (Daniel 9:27)

**Church** – This period when the Bride and Groom spend time together seems to show that the Bride of Jesus will be with Him in Heaven. This appears to indicate a pre-Tribulation gathering of the Church, and is described in Isaiah 26:20; “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Praise the Lord!

12 – The Marriage Supper

**Jewish Wedding** – A wedding feast was given for the Bride and Groom.

**Church** – “‘Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: Blessed [are] those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” (The Revelation 19:7-9)

From the summary given by Moses, and many other Scriptures, it appears that the **Day of Atonement** will be the Day when the Lord Jesus sets foot on the Mount of Olives and fights against all nations.

Zechariah 14:1-4 “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem on the east.”

Daniel's last seven days (Daniel 9:27) appear to parallel the seven years of the Tribulation, while the Bride of Christ is in Heaven consummating union to Jesus Messiah and celebrating with the marriage supper. The next *appointed time* is the **Day of Atonement**. This indicates that at the end of the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus will return to redeem and make Atonement for Israel.

The Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32:1-43, is a summary of the Lord's dealings with Israel. The latter part of this passage is prophetic of the Last Days. The very last verse of the Song of Moses says:

“Rejoice, O ye nations, [with] his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, **and will be merciful unto his land, [and] to his people.**”

The Hebrew word translated as “merciful” is *kaphar* (Strong's H3722), and is rendered “make atonement” in the vast majority of its appearances in the Old Testament. Therefore, this verse says “**He will provide atonement for His land and His people.**”

In the Revelation, immediately following the Marriage supper of the Lamb is the Return of Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

“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 doth judge and make war. His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: 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, white and clean. ”

– Revelation 19:11-14

Note that the “armies [which were] in heaven” were clothed in fine linen, white and clean, just like the Bride was given in the preceding verse 19:8. This identifies the “armies” as the Bride of Christ, Saints and Children of God, who will return in victory with the Lord Jesus.

It appears that this day will be the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement.

The next, and last, *appointed time* is the **Feast of Tabernacles** which was an eight-day event. It occurred at the time of the fall harvest, and was to be a time of joy and celebration.

Deuteronomy 16:13-14 “Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that [are] within thy gates.”

The word *tabernacle* can be a noun or a verb. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a noun, but it was also a verb describing where the Lord dwelled, or tabernacled, with Israel. In the Kingdom Age the Lord Jesus will dwell, or tabernacle, with mankind.

In the Deuteronomy instructions the Children of Israel are told to celebrate for seven days. In the instructions given in Leviticus 23:33-43 they are told to hold a sacred assembly on the eighth day. In the Bible, seven is the number of completion. Therefore, eight is the number of new beginnings. Noah and his family were eight persons, and represented a new beginning for mankind. A male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day, at the beginning of his life. King David, who laid the foundations for the beginning of the Kingdom of Israel, was the eighth son of Jesse. This eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles indicates new beginnings.

After the traditional **Jewish Wedding**, the Bride and Groom lived together. The **Church** will live with the Lord Jesus forever!

The Children of Israel were also instructed to live in booths or tents during this feast. This was to be a memorial of the time when the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt. The Feast of Tabernacles is about Deliverance and will be fulfilled when the Lord delivers Israel from her enemies. Then there will be a New Beginning for the Kingdom of God.

The parallels between the Jewish Wedding and the Church's Biblical Wedding are simply amazing! What a wonderful picture and wonderful hope this pattern gives to those who are saved and are the Children of God. And only the God of Creation could place this pattern within and throughout the sixty-six books of His Word. Our Heavenly Father is the ultimate Wedding Planner! May His name be praised forever!