



## **Our Bridal Identity revealed in the ancient Jewish wedding customs**

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### ***Eph. 1: 25-27; 31-32***

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*<sup>25</sup>Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,<sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,<sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.....<sup>31</sup> "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

## STAGE 1 - The Shiddukhin - Arrangements preliminary to Betrothal

### Marriages were often arranged (shiddukhin)

Father's would choose the bride for their son e.g. Gen 24:1-4 Abraham and Isaac

God chose us for His Son

*You did not choose me, but I chose you (John 15:16)*

*<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (Eph. 1:4)*

### Father and Son leave their home

Father and Son leave their home and travel to the girl's home for the purpose of obtaining a wife through the establishing of a marriage covenant which is called a *katubah*

Jesus left heaven and came to earth for the purpose of obtaining a bride through the establishment of the new covenant

## STAGE 1 - The Shiddukhin - Arrangements preliminary to Betrothal

### The bridal price is established

They meet with the father of the chosen girl to negotiate the bridal price (*mohar*). The price was a direct reflection of the value the young man placed on her. He understood that he would pay dearly.

The Father and the Son met together before the foundation of the world and determined our bridal price. The most extravagant price that could ever be paid – the very life of His Son.

*<sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. (1 Cor. 6:20)*

*<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. <sup>20</sup> He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (1 Peter 1:18-20)*

## STAGE 1 - The Shiddukhin - Arrangements preliminary to Betrothal

### Betrothal date is set.

The father and son leave and the son returns to his home and does whatever he has to do to get the bridal price, selling whatever he must.

Jesus sold all to purchase His bride

<sup>44</sup> *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matthew 13:44)*

### Ritual immersion

Usually prior to the formal betrothal, it was common for the bride and groom to separately take a ritual immersion (*mikveh*) which was symbolic of spiritual cleansing. This is the same washing as a priest went through before entering into the Holy place.

Our immersion is our baptism indicating a separation from a former way of life to a new one. Entering into our bridal and our priestly identity.

Jesus – Matt. 3: 13-17 (Bridegroom and High Priest)  
Us – Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11 (Bride and priest)

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### Betrothal date arrives

The young man and his parents go to the girl's house for the betrothal dinner. This is done publicly under the huppah canopy where they declare their intention of becoming betrothed.

We see much of what took place at this betrothal dinner in what Jesus shared with His disciples at the last supper in the upper room

### The marriage covenant is presented

The marriage covenant, *Katubah*, states the bridal price, the promise to support and care for her and the terms of the marriage should she accept. This covenant can only be broken by divorce.

Jesus presents the covenant in the upper room

<sup>20</sup> *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:20)*

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### The Father offers the cup to the groom

The young man drinks signifying his willingness to sacrifice in order to make her his wife.

Jesus drinks the cup in Gethsemane

*<sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matt. 26:39)*

When Peter cuts off the servant's ear

*"... shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (John 18:11)*

### The Bride drinks the cup

Signifying her willingness to enter into marriage saying, "I accept your gift and your life and I offer you my life in return.

Disciples drink the cup.

*<sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt 26:27-28)*

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### The bridal payment

Once they have drunk the cup the young man hands over the bridal price to the father

Jesus hands over the bridal price

*<sup>46</sup> Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46)*

### The bridegroom then presents gifts

The bridegroom gives gifts called *Matan* which means gift or pledge and in Greek is "charismata". This gift is a pledge of his love and a promise that he will return.

Jesus has given the gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit

*... were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee (matan/charismata) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph.1:13-14)*

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### Betrothal is now complete

Once the groom gives something of value to the woman and she accepts it the betrothal is complete. This completed rite is known in Hebrew as *kiddushin* which means sanctification. The bride is not only 'set apart' but entering a season of sanctification.

We are sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 10:10)

*... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Heb. 10:10)*

### The Bride promises to pay her dowry

We promise to pay our dowry of a yielded life, a life set apart, holy, pure and belonging to another. (1 Cor. 5:15-20)

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### The Groom makes a speech

He says "I go to prepare a place for you. I will come back for you when it is ready."

Jesus comforted His disciples with the same promise. (John 14:2, 3) The disciples would have fully understood this as bridal language.

*<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And 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.*

### He leaves the covenant (katubah) with the bride

From this time onward she is referred to as "the one who was bought with a price." She wears a special veil signifying she is now set apart, sanctified and belongs to another.

We have been bought with a price

*<sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. .... <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (! Cor. 6:17, 19-20)*

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### She takes on his name

She takes on his name and is considered his legal wife with all the rights and privileges

We have all the authority through our betrothal to Jesus (Mark 16:17-18; Luke 9:1-2)

### He returns to his father's house

He begins building on to his father's house. Rabbi's determined that the chamber had to be better than the place she currently lived in. The father was the judge of when it was finished and when the young man could claim his bride – the son didn't know when that day would be.

Jesus went to prepare a place for us in His Father's house (John 14:2-3) He told us that only His Father knew when He would return (Matt. 24:36)

## Stage 2 -The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

### The bride prepares

She prepares her wedding garment and consecrates herself.

We prepare ourselves for our wedding by preparing our garments which are our righteous acts (Rev. 19:7-8) and clothing ourselves in the robe of righteousness (Is. 6:10)

Custom dictated she should have a lamp and oil constantly prepared as although she knew the approximate timing (one year) she did not know the day or the hour. Therefore she constantly anticipated his return.

Jesus told us to watch and be ready so that we also are constantly anticipating His return. The parable of the 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1-13)

During this season she will tell everyone she knows about her beloved. There is nothing more she can do to attract or win her beloved's heart – she already belongs to him and him to her.

We are told to go into all the world and preach the gospel. The good news of our Bridegroom. (Mark. 16:15)

She remembers the extravagant price he paid and reads the marriage contract he left with her. If another offers her a contract she refuses because she belongs to another.

We continually remind ourselves of the price Jesus has paid through the cross and keep ourselves only for Him.

## STAGE 3 - The Nissuin - Marriage Itself

### She gathers her bridesmaids

Her bridesmaids would sleep in her room and the bride would often sleep in her wedding dress so they were ready for the bridegroom's return. Jewish brides were often stolen at night so she was always ready.

Jesus will come as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2) and we do not know the day or the hour (Matt. 24:36) In fellowship together we wait with anticipation for His return.

## STAGE 3 - The Nissuin - Marriage Itself

### Father decides it is time

The father inspects the bridal suite and determines that it is time. The groom gathers his friends to claim his bride.

Jesus will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep i.e. those who have died and are with Him in heaven. (1 Thess. 4:14) Jesus told His disciples that He did not know the day or hour of His return ([Mat. 24:32-36](#)) This is not so much to say He does not have all knowledge but, as with any Jewish bridegroom, He must wait for His Father to give the word that the set time has come.

When close the friends would run ahead and announce that the bridegroom was near shouting, "Behold the bridegroom! The bridegroom is coming! Blessed is he who comes!"

The parable of the 10 virgins tells us that at midnight there was a shout. (Matt. 26:6) Jesus told the Jewish people that he would not return until they cried out, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:39)

## STAGE 3 - The Nissuin - Marriage Itself

### The shofar is blown

She is only allowed enough time to light her lamp.

The trumpet shall sound and we shall be raised.

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (1 Cor. 15:52)*

### The bride is taken

The groom would charge in and take his bride and there would be a great celebration. After the festivities the husband was free to bring his bride to their new home to live together as husband and wife in the full covenant of marriage.

In Revelation 19 we see Jesus celebrating His marriage supper as He comes and takes us to be with Him before we return together to rule and reign on the earth.

*<sup>7</sup> 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;<sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"*

### **Matthew 9:15**

*And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*