

Christ's Bride: the Betrothal and the Feast - 06/06/10

Matt 26.26-29 Rev 19.6-9

David showed us last week that God calls himself Israel's husband. Showed us **Isa 54***: "...*your Maker is your Husband*" (*echoed in **Jer 31.32**: "...*they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them*"). The image of mankind being either in or out of a marriage with God, or cheating on Him, is presented throughout the OT, and it continues into the NT when just as God the Father called himself the Husband, so Christ calls Himself the Bridegroom (**Jn 3**, also **Matt 9 & 25**). Paul continues the theme calling earthly husbands to follow Christ's eg (**Eph 5.25-27**).

The great climax of history as we enter new heaven/earth is described amongst other things as our groom returning for His bride (**Rev 19**). But first, there's another NT passage I'd like us to look at that seems to bear no relevance to the pic of Bride. Or does it?

Read **Matt 26.26-29**. Some manuscripts insert "new" = NEW COVENANT. A new marriage proposal. What does this have to do with the bride pic? Let me explain:

The Betrothal:

Jewish marriages focus on 2 separate parts: BETROTHAL and MARRIAGE. Nowadays it usually occurs together, but in ancient times separate: the betrothal itself was as good as declaring the couple married but they did not live together immediately as man & wife. Unfaithfulness within an engagement was considered as adultery. When Jewish man makes a betrothal, he presents the KETUVAH (written notice of the covenant being made). Protects the woman's rights. Written vows. If she accepts, she drinks from a cup of wine bridegroom has poured out for her. Sound familiar? The groom says: "*I will not drink of this cup until we are reunited*". If he did, he'd be proposing to somebody else! He then goes away for a set period of time (up to 1 year; to prepare a place) when they are then brought together for the marriage ceremony.

Betrothal for us = an absolute promise by Christ that He asks for our hand for eternity. Absolute security, the promise of everything that matters, made possible by Him. And He didn't just humble Himself to get on one knee to propose this, but humbled Himself to death on a cross so that chasm between us and God might be bridged by Him. And he has now gone away to prepare a place for us (**Jn 14.2-3**)

At the Last Supper, Christ confirmed His betrothal: "*Here's the cup, will you marry me?*". And once He'd finished His work on the Cross, He went to prepare a home. One day he'll return to take those who said "Yes" back home with Him forever.

Do you know His security? Do you have confidence in His absolute promise to you? (**Josh 1.5, Heb 13.5, 2 Cor 1.20a**)

So we're *between* betrothal (as good as married, secure) and the wedding feast itself...

The Feast:

Rev 19.6-9

Looking forward to that great party with our King as everything is consummated, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that there's so much to enjoy now. Until our great wedding feast with Christ, we can find great excitement in knowing we can never know Him enough. We should be never having enough of Him! Are you enjoying the great romance?

Are you betrothed to Christ? Or are you only dating Him? Are you merely flirting with Him? Don't miss out on the great romance that is available to you, RIGHT NOW.

Equally important: are you betrothed to Him, but *flirting* with another? My marriage = not just a promise in 1994, but a daily promise. Same here. Secure in betrothal, FOREVER, but also a daily walk here and now.

...CHOSEN: v9: "*invited*" = who? = the bride. No one gets in as a guest. You can't slip in as a friend of the church. You don't come to the feast as a distant relative. You're in or you're out. You are invited to accept His marriage proposal. It's up to you.

...ADORNED: v7b-8: What are those righteous deeds? Didn't [Isa 64.6](#) say they were like bloody rags?

- But, in HIM = Bride/Church's gown of righteous deeds is her groom's gift of grace
- [Eph 5.25-27](#): "sanctify", "cleansed", "present... to Himself in splendour" - our righteous deeds ([Rev 19.7b-8](#)) are a co-labouring, a responsibility, but only made possible in the first place by HIS cleansing.

Who are you adorning yourself for? Who are you trying to change for? Yourself? Others? Christ? Who are you trying to please? Flirting elsewhere?

Note: the gown of fine linen/righteous deeds is provided by Him, and meant for Him: Esther, as she was preparing herself for presentation to King Xerxes - when he chose her as wife - she was GIVEN the things she needed for adornment. She didn't bring her own make-up bags and fancy outfits she'd been able to afford from the Next sale: HE provided the cosmetics, perfumes and "Anything she wanted" ([Esther 2.13](#)).

The Betrothal:

- Have you accepted His proposal? Are you only dating Him? Or merely flirting?
- Have you been drinking from another cup/unfaithful?
- Are you secure in His absolute betrothal/promise?

The Feast:

- Who are you adorning yourself for?
- Are your deeds (linen) what He has provided, or purely legalistic WORKS?

Cell Q's:

1. What aspects of life can we be in danger of flirting with? How can we be unfaithful to Christ as our groom?
2. How can we keep our eyes from straying away from our Groom?
3. Does anybody struggle with the security that Christ's betrothal promises? How can we help each other know this truth more and more?
4. Pray for each other, and share if appropriate, regarding our motivations: who are we trying to please? Ourselves? Others? Him?