

It is all about Covenant

It is important to learn about the covenant and how it is progressive.....

1. The Blood covenant, entering into a relationship of servitude, wherein we must learn obedience.

2. Next is the salt covenant, that explains the everlasting covenant of friendship.....it cannot be broken...

3. Then the sandal covenant, also called the covenant of inheritance, and the Jews explain the ancient Hebrew custom of using sandals to define boundaries..... This is equivalized in human parenting where if a parent does a good job of training a child in obedience (blood covenant), the child will become a friend (salt covenant). A son or daughter who matures and becomes a responsible adult that eventually qualifies for an inheritance (sandal covenant). As with the covenants we make with God, progressing to the salt and sandal covenant is a major goal of parenting, neither one is where effective parenting begins. If you start by being a child's friend instead of training him or her in obedience, you have the whole thing backwards.

Likewise in our evolving covenants with God. The relationship offered by each of the preceding covenants makes the next covenant possible. And all of this leads into a major point: As we enter into each new or "renewed" covenant with God we do not leave behind the responsibilities - or the benefits - of the preceding one.

4. All of this points to the final covenant, the one of betrothal. The most intimate relationship we can have with God.....

All these covenants point to the progressive nature of our purification, relationship, and partnership with God. We do not acquire our salvation through any "works" connected with each covenant. Only Yahushua's (Jesus) death on the stake (cross) and our acceptance of His forgiveness, provide for that. To illustrate this literally, recall the Last Supper in the Upper room (John 13:4-14). Yahushua offered the inheritance of His heavenly kingdom to His disciples. By

removing their sandals and washing their feet He was giving them a new inheritance, His own. He was establishing a relationship of purity without manmade barriers, at the same time fulfilling the promise in John 1:12-13 "To them He gave the power to become sons of God ... ". Some of the disciples protested at first, but His response was very clear: "If I don't do this you'll have no part of Me."

Nowadays, many believers think you can get saved and have all the intimacy you'll ever need by accepting the free gift, with no additional effort on your part. But salvation is only the beginning – it's only the first step toward establishing the intimacy that God desires. At that moment (or very soon afterwards) God gives to each one of us the choice of increasing the maturity and intimacy of our relationship with Him.....many people miss that.... The Lord will give us a step-by-step increase of His kingdom in our lives if we choose to walk out our faith (Philippians 2:12)... But we have to consciously make that commitment to move beyond basic salvation and enter into true covenant relationships with Him. When we do, He will give us the strength, the knowledge and the stamina to move continually forward. As we show that we can be faithful with one step, He will show us the next. The final step in the process of restoration is in the hand of the bridegroom alone. Why marriage? Because that is the ultimate fulfillment of all the covenants. God's goal for us is a marriage relationship with Himself, involving complete intimacy. Marriage is the renewed relationship He desires.

Just in the little bit I have written up to now we should start to understand things much better.....for example, the verses that tell of Yahushua (Jesus) removing the sandals and washing the feet, and His telling the disciples that if they didn't let him, they would have no part of Him. Now, understanding the sandal covenant, it makes more sense the same with the rich man story.....Matthew 19:16-29 This story shows us what Yahushua is looking for in someone who aspires to be both a servant and a friend. The young man was obedient to God's commandments, but he found it difficult to enter into Yahushua's offer of a deeper relationship. Yahushua basically said, "You are already my servant and my friend; now come and be My son." But the young man wasn't quite ready to trade in his earthly inheritance for an increased share in the Heavenly kingdom.

Therefore, his poor decision prevented him from entering into a deeper relationship and getting any further than the friendship (salt) covenant. This does not mean, that the rich young ruler "lost out" on what he had settled with God up to that moment. His salvation was never in question. But like many today who are called into deeper relationships, the rich young ruler simply failed to draw closer when the opportunity came.

I never could understand why the implication was that because the young man didn't sell all he had to follow Jesus, why he lost out. Many people accuse Christians today.....you haven't sold all you have, so you're not following Jesus.....

Rev. 3:20...Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me.

Most of us believe this verse to be the voice of Yahushua, reaching out to mankind. He's standing at their heart's door, asking to come in and save them from their sins. That's true, but it's not the whole story. Because most of us have no awareness of the ancient Hebrew culture in which the Tanach (Old Testament) and Brit Hadassah (New Testament) were set, we often miss the true import of a thoroughly familiar, deeply meaningful, yet barely understood metaphor. There are some pages that discuss the Hebrew tradition of the marriage process.....from interest/offer to finish..... Once the prospective bridegroom made his first official move, he brought his father to the intended bride's house. They carried a betrothal cup, wine and the anticipated price in a pouch. When they got there, they knocked. The prospective brides' father would be on the other side of the door, but before he opened, he would peek through a little window, identify the visitors, then look to his daughter to confirm what, in most cases, she had long since settled in her own mind. Should he open the door? If she said yes, for all practical purposes the commitment to work through the betrothal process and arrive at a fully functioning marriage was made at that moment.

Therefore, hers was not a lightly made decision, for the issue was not, "Can we have a wedding?" Once the door was opened the only remaining question was,

"We can have a marriage if we can work out the terms ... so what will they be?" In other words, opening the door was the first major step toward making a marriage, which is precisely what Yahushua (Jesus) is saying in the verse. You open the door, He comes in, and the restoration process begins. At that point, you have salvation. But beyond that, He is asking you if you will enter into the covenant of betrothal with Him. Will you walk in a loving relationship with your bridegroom? But that's not the only significant parallel here. The choice is "ours" exactly as the choice was always that of the ancient Hebrew bride. If she refused to open the door the groom would make a u-turn and head for home.

The Betrothal

The betrothal was binding and could only be undone by a divorce with proper grounds, such as the bride being found not to be a virgin, (see Joseph and Mary - Matt 1:18-19) The young man prepared a *Ketubah*, or marriage contract (or covenant) which he presented to the intended bride and her father. Included in this was the "Bride Price", which was appropriate in that society to compensate the young woman's parents for the cost of raising her, as well as being an expression of his love for her.

Our Messiah bought us by offering up His life. His Shed Blood was the Bride Price.

Acceptance

To see if the proposal was accepted, the young man would pour a cup of wine for his beloved and wait to see if she drank it. This cup represents a blood covenant. If she drank the cup she would have accepted the proposal and they would be betrothed. The young man would then give gifts to his beloved, and then take his leave. The young woman would have to wait for him to return and collect her.

The symbolism or meaning of taking the Cup is for me the most intimate moment of all.

The cup is of silver - Silver means or symbolizes Redemption. That is why the communion sets are always of silver.

The "wine" (which we know by research was always unfermented) in the cup represents the Blood that was shed for our cleansing, redemption and healing.

The Wedding Chamber and the Chuppah

Before leaving the young man would announce, "I am going to prepare a place for you", and "I will return for you when it is ready". The usual practice was for the young man to return to his father's house and build a honeymoon room there. This is what is symbolized by the *Chuppah* or canopy which is characteristic of Jewish weddings. He was not allowed to skimp on the work and had to get his father's approval before he could consider it ready for his bride. If asked the date of his wedding he would have to reply, "Only my father knows." Meanwhile the bride would be making herself ready so that she would be pure and beautiful for her bridegroom. During this time she would wear a veil when she went out to show she was spoken for (she has been bought with a price).

The Wedding

When the wedding chamber was ready the bridegroom could collect his bride. He could do this at any time so therefore the bride would make special arrangements. It was the custom for a bride to keep a lamp, her veil and her other things beside her bed. Her bridesmaids were also waiting and had to have oil ready for their lamps. When the groom and his friends got close to the bride's house they would give a shout and blow a shofar to let her know to be ready.

The Bride is then snatched away to the father's house.

When the wedding party arrived at the father's house the newly weds went into the wedding chamber for a seven day honeymoon and the groom's best friend stood outside waiting for the groom to tell him that the marriage had been consummated. The proof of this was the bed-sheet bearing the blood shed by the bride as a result of her first sexual intercourse. This is notable for two reasons. It speaks of purity before marriage, but it also shows a blood covenant

(the most solemn and binding kind) such as God's covenant with His people. Then all the friends really started celebrating for the seven days that the couple were honeymooning. When the couple emerged there would be much congratulation and the Marriage Supper could begin. This gives us a whole new meaning to Yahushua (Jesus) preparing a place for us as well as taking the cup unworthily.

At the same time, once his initial proposal had been made and accepted, the groom was utterly and totally committed. Only by a written bill of divorce, on extremely limited grounds, could he ever back out.....please just pause and look at what is offered here and ask the Lord to open your eyes of understanding..... You are invited to compare the above to the betrothal covenant between ourselves and Yahushua (Jesus). Opening our heart's door to Him is the same as accepting Him as our redeemer and forming a lasting relationship with Him. It's the first step in the process.

On the other hand, we can accept eternal salvation and even avail ourselves of all the benefits of a servant covenant with Him, including heaven itself, without ever moving beyond that to betrothal. In fact, if we decide to go a little further than simply opening the door, we might even be able to establish and maintain the servant covenant, then the friendship covenant, and perhaps even the inheritance covenant without ever moving beyond that last point.

Becoming the actual bride of Yeshua requires a committed, intimate relationship with Him that goes well beyond all the preliminaries.

To wait patiently whilst working on her wedding Garment is not as easy as it sounds. Only through persistent faith and the working of the Ruach Haqodesh (The Holy Spirit) the Bride keeps her lamp burning, the wick of the lamp gets clogged up easily and needs constant trimming and cleaning to keep burning brightly.

Constant spiritual cleansing ensures an abundant supply of Ruach Haqodesh (Holy Spirit) oil to keep her lamp burning until the bridegroom arrives.

Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

How many of us are willing to separate or distance ourselves from those things that are not created, designed by, or pleasing to God? Even so, if we do desire to take the betrothal step, we can still back out at any time, and many of us do.

How many are sitting idly by just to maybe some day soon find out that the Groom came and found that the fire of that once passionate relationship has gone cold and turn away in disappointment, leaving one in that state of utter darkness

Yet the invitation to be part of the bride is still there, except for those times when we give back the free gift of salvation. 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

The four cups of wine

Think once again in terms of the four types of covenant.

Remember, they are progressive in nature, meaning that you must enter into the first three covenants - in order - before you can enter into number four.

Remember also the names and the implications of each one, for you're about to see how the servant, friendship and inheritance covenants are woven into covenant number 4. Each one helps to establish, to support and to reinforce the ancient Hebrew betrothal contract. In turn, the progression of commitments about to take place during the betrothal process, beginning on the evening when the groom comes and knocks, mirrors the sequence of commitments in the 4 covenants.

In His capacity as the Ultimate Master of Symbolism, God established 4 cups of wine as milestones, or "markers", to signify exactly where the betrothal parties were in their negotiations. Each cup corresponded to a covenant, but it also

represented something that all the participants had to physically grasp, to physically consume and make part of themselves. It goes without saying that each person would also have to participate mentally and spiritually at each step of the way, or the process would break down.

Now, refer back to the reference to "sup with Him" from Revelation 3:20, for it has to do with what traditionally happened next. Once the prospective groom and his father were inside the prospective brides home, as they worked out all the details of the wedding they would eat dinner together with the prospective bride's family. In this instance, the visiting father and son represented their entire family.

Members of the two families would also drink 3 of the 4 betrothal cups of wine, one cup each at certain well-established points throughout the negotiating process.

Cup number 1.

The first cup was the cup of Sanctification which equated to a servant (blood) covenant between the two families. This cup was consumed almost as soon as the door closed. The groom, his father, and every member of the bride's family above the age of accountability participated, for each member of each family was agreeing to serve the other family.

Sanctification embodies the idea of setting ourselves apart for God. Just as God sanctified the Nation of Israel, these two families were doing the same with respect to each other. In effect they were making a sacred commitment to become one giant family, each person to unilaterally serve all the new members. That's partly why the support structure underlying the ancient Jewish marriages was so strong.

Ephesians 1:7, 2 Corinthians 11:2

Cup number 2.

The second cup was the Cup of Betrothal, Cup of Plagues, Cup of Bargaining, or the Cup of Dedication, which presented a salt covenant between the families.

This cup was consumed by the bride and groom and their two fathers only. The two families, represented here by the fathers, were covenanting to become eternal friends with their joint son and daughter, and with each other.

As they ate, the members of both families haggled over the details of the marriage contract. This is usually where the negotiations would break down if they were ever going to. But if they managed to surmount all the difficulties, the families entered into a friendship covenant even as they established the terms of the upcoming marriage. In similar fashion, we are admonished to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12) when we accept the Lord's offer of servant hood, which then matures into friendship.

The issues the families established were straightforward and direct, just as the ancient Hebrews themselves were. How much would the groom's family contribute to the wedding feast? Were would they hold it? What skills would the bride need to acquire to become a Proverbs 31 wife? What possessions would she bring with her? Did she fully understand her responsibility to remain pure?

The bride's family would also want to know how the groom intended to support her. Just as it was the bride's primary responsibility to purify and prepare herself, the groom's chief responsibility was to go away and prepare a place for her to live. Many times her new quarters would be no more than a room, built on the side of his father's house. This would hardly equal what Yahushua promises us in John 14:2, yet the whole process certainly corresponds to the reference in that verse.

1 Corinthians 9:27, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 John 3:3

Cup number 3.

The third cup was the Cup of Redemption or the Cup of Inheritance which represented a sandal covenant and signified the shared inheritance of the marriage partners. This cup was drunk at the end of the meal, by the bride and groom only, to symbolize their exclusive commitment to each other, along with their increasing level of intimacy.

It also officially “sealed” the marriage agreement between them. Once the bargaining was over, the families brought in a scribe who wrote out all the terms of the marriage covenant in a formal agreement, called a ketubah.

At that point the young men of the family would hit the streets and blow their rams horn trumpets (shofars), announcing to the entire world that the marriage contract had been signed. For all intents and purposes the bride and groom were now officially married, even though neither the ceremony nor the consummation had yet occurred. Nevertheless, from that moment onward, if either one died, the survivor would fully inherit the deceased partner’s possessions.

The third cup also corresponded to the cup Yahushua shared with His disciples during the Passover feast, or the Last supper, when he washed their feet and thus transferred His inheritance to them (sandal covenant). He also made further reference to His coming marriage to His *kalah*, His “called out ones,” knowing that it was customary for the groom not to drink wine again until the wedding ceremony. That explains why He said he would not touch the fruit of the vine again until He could do so with them in the Kingdom of Heaven. He even maintained his vow as He hung on the stake (cross) when He refused the pain numbing wine that the Roman soldiers offered.

Spiritually at this point we accept our heavenly inheritance and we develop a yearning towards that which is Heavenly, moving away from the earthly. We are in the process of moving house. The Bridal chamber (chuppah) in heaven awaits us there.

Please note the context: It is currently not the time or our job to establish the Kingdom on earth. After the Tribulation Messiah will come and establish His Kingdom on earth to rule and reign with His Bride for a thousand years.

The meaning of communion.....

None of this can be modified by our opinion or interpretation. We don't get a list of options, except for choosing whether we'll participate in the first place. Once we're in a covenant with Yahushua we don't get the option of restructuring that

relationship to suit ourselves. Yet sadly, the modern Church has altered the very fabric of the Hebraic relationship that God began with Adam and Eve. We have literally thrown away our understanding in favor of doing it our own way. Yet God has shown us very clearly how He wants to be approached. It is not our option to say that we, on the contrary, have a better idea. God says, "This is how you go about mending and restoring your relationship with Me."

Given that dynamic, it is totally presumptuous and futile of us to try to alter our relationship and our approach to God. From God's perspective, neither is the meaning and import of any of the four covenant types up for discussion. God offered mankind a betrothal contract starting 6,000 years ago, and sealed the terms 2,000 years ago. It is also not accidental that the cups of wine of the betrothal covenant overlay - and thus reinforce - the individual covenants in sequence. All this happens on purpose, for God was building a seamless mosaic of concepts that has, at its foundation, a commitment to establish and maintain a relationship leading to marriage and this is the ultimate responsibility. Hence it requires the ultimate covenant.

Cup number 4.

The fourth cup of wine was the Cup of Praise (Rubin). Shared between the bride and groom only during the wedding ceremony itself. This fourth cup also awaits all those who are chosen to be the bride by Yahushua. It will be taken on the wedding day and will forever seal Yahushua's union with His beloved. *Yahushua (Jesus) is the tree of the vine and we are the branches. We get our life giving sap and sustenance through the Ruach Haqodesh (The Holy Spirit) (Rom 5:5) from Him bringing forth good fruits pleasing unto Him.*

We become eligible for the fourth covenant only after we've met all the previous requirements by entering into the first three. The decisions to do so are ours alone.

What is a ketubah?

Ketubah is the Hebrew word for marriage contract. As talked about above, the terms of the contract were worked out between the two families during the meal

they shared together. When both sides were satisfied they brought in a scribe to write the actual document itself, which had five parts.

- 1) First came a combined family history of the bride and groom, which included detailed family trees and anecdotes.
- 2) Second came a personal and family history of the bride, with a detailed family tree and anecdotes.
- 3) Third came a personal and family history of the groom, also with a family tree and anecdotes.
- 4) Fourth came the story of how the bride and groom met, with related anecdotes.
- 5) Fifth came a final section detailing both the bride's and the groom's responsibilities before and after the wedding.

Look at the significant parallels to the marriage contract itself, one from the beginning of scripture and one from the very end.

The first five books of the Bible correspond to the five parts of the ancient Hebrew ketubah.

- 1) Genesis provides the combined family history of the bride and groom.
- 2) Exodus gives the personal and family history of the bride.
- 3) Leviticus provides the history of God's family, the Levites.
- 4) Numbers tells of God's love affair with His people in the wilderness and records His joys and sorrows as He reaches out to His bride.
- 5) Deuteronomy specifies the responsibilities that both bride and groom must fulfill.

The first five books of the Bible are written as a marriage contract between God and His people.

I go to prepare.....

By the time the happy couple had drunk the third cup of wine, only three more "milestones" remained.

- 1) First, the groom had to pay the bride price (which he'd brought with him), equaling 30 pieces of silver in Yahushua's time. It was 100% refundable if the bride turned out to be impure. This specific amount was also the price of a male bondservant (Exodus 21:32) and came to symbolize the redemption price of a bride (Leviticus 27:4).
- 2) Second, the groom now had the sole responsibility to go and prepare a home. ... In this enterprise the groom was under the ironclad rule of his father, who was the only person empowered to judge when the groom's bridal preparation (as per the *ketubah*) were sufficient and complete.
- 3) Third, the groom finalized his preparations, then he would let the word slip out that the wedding day was near...

The groom could come anytime between 6 and midnight, usually on the second through the 4th day of the week. When he did so he had to see his bride's welcoming light in her window. If she let it burn out he would take it as a sign that she had either changed her mind or simply did not care anymore, and he would turn away and leave her in darkness.

After the snatching away of the bride and entering the bridal chamber itself would come the moment of *echad*, or physical unity. The parents of the bride would invite the guests to enjoy the feast. The music would swell, the dancing would begin and the wine would flow for the first of seven days.

Meanwhile the bride and groom would be inside the private room provided especially for them, set apart from the noise. Soon their marriage would be complete in every sense.

On the other hand, if the groom discovered that his bride was not a virgin, or worse pregnant, the whole situation would immediately change. Within the ancient Hebrew culture, the groom had four choices:

- 1) He could let her pay the price for her unfaithfulness, which was death.
- 2) He could quietly give her a writ of divorce and walk away, which is what Joseph started to do with Mary before the angel intervened. But this approach was risky for her; later on, if other witnesses came forward to accuse her of adultery, the law would still require her to pay the death penalty (Matthew 1:19).
- 3) He could pretend the child was his. If he discovered the truth before the wedding, he could forfeit the ceremony and simply begin living with his new wife, who was already married to him anyway from a legal point of view. This is essentially what Joseph did with Mary
- 4) He could choose to be her *goel* (redeemer) and take her punishment upon himself. In the case of sexual impurity, he would pay her fee ... death. The groom could also redeem his bride for violating Torah in other ways as well, whatever her violations might involved including monetary debts of all kinds. The biggest drawback in this approach was that the groom could never again refuse to pay for any "required redemption" as long as they stayed married. He'd established a potentially harsh precedent; once he'd redeemed her even one time he had to pay the same price every time she violated torah after that, as long as she was his wife.

What does this all mean?

This is the introduction of the fundamental concepts that underlie Brit Hadassah (The New Testament) and the book of Revelation. This will aid in understanding Revelation as never before. Right now the message is still quite simple. Each of us has both the obligation and the privilege of choosing the relationship we will have with God. We can be His servant, his friend, His son, or his daughter.

Beyond that, we can purify ourselves, accept each of the covenants He offers and accept the ultimate union. We can be part of His bride.

But becoming part of the bride doesn't happen automatically. This is probably the most important point of this whole article. Many assume that salvation alone is all they need to become "one with Christ," now and forever united with Him as His Chosen One, His bride dressed in white.

It isn't that simple. Salvation equals ... salvation! Nothing less, but also nothing more. Salvation / covenant / betrothal is not a three-for-one sale. Salvation means you can come to the wedding, which is quite an invitation all by itself, but you can't be a guest and a bride at the same time.

One more example.....

Matthew 23:37 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Most of us understand this verse on the simplest level, as saying that He loved them and still loves us, as a mother loves her chicks. But from a Hebrew perspective this verse means much more. Remember, Hebrew scripture works on four levels! The Hebrew word translated as "wings" is *kanaf* and can mean wings, but here it is also used to describe the corners of Yahushua's prayer shawl, His *talit*. Hanging from the corners of the *talit* are the *tzit-tzit*, what most people call "fringes" but which are actually four cords doubled over and knotted in a distinct pattern, numerically spelling out the name of YHWH God.

Yahushua Himself provided the "hen" metaphor, but in addition He was referring to what a loving groom would do for his wife. At the end of a Hebrew marriage ceremony he would spread his arms around her and wrap her up in his *talit*, thus protecting her but also making them as one, even as he "covered" both of them with the name and the word of YHWH God.

Thus He was also saying how much he yearned to be in a marriage relationship with His people.

The Invitation is still open for us to receive and act, but time is running out!

What is your position at this moment?

Most Christians/Believers are still on a fleshly level and are not living a Holy and set apart life anxiously awaiting the return of their Heavenly Bride Groom.

In the Brit Hadassah (New Testament) Paul says in 1 Thess 4:3

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication:”

Fornication could be also interpreted as Worldliness according to James 4:4

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. ”

If we love the world, we follow the god of this world. 1 John 5:19b “and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

That makes us spiritually unfaithful to our Bridegroom Rev 2:4-5:

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.
⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Ecc 9:8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. The bride's garment must at all times be spotless and clean, and that can only be maintained by the indwelling Ruach Haqodesh (Holy Spirit) in us.

That is why our lamps must be kept burning continually.

Ruach Haqodesh means Spirit of Set Apartness or the Spirit that sets apart.

Tanach means the Old Testament

Brit Hadassah means the New Testament

For Further Study we recommend the following Article:

1. [The True Feasts of the Messiah](#)