

# Calling the Bride



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“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

The Marriage -  
Understanding the Principles of Salvation

**Before** His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples that He would be going to prepare a place for them and that He would come again so that they would be with Him. Jesus used references to Hebrew marriage customs several times in His teachings and this is one of them.–

*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.*

*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 (John 14:2,3).*

In His parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), Jesus is the Bridegroom who returns to collect His waiting bride.

When a Hebrew couple was to be married, they first participated in an engagement ceremony. They began by separately taking a bath called a mikveh. Christians liken this custom to baptism.

The betrothal/engagement was so binding that the only way it could be broken was if either the bride or the groom were found to be unfaithful, then a divorce would have to be obtained, even though the couple had not as yet been formally married.

After the betrothal ceremony, the bridegroom left to build a house for his bride. The process usually took about a year. In the meantime the bride would prepare herself for the wedding. Then when the bride's new home was finally completed, the bridegroom would come for her unexpectedly, so she always needed to be in a state of readiness.

Relating this back to John 14:2,3; Jesus is the bridegroom who was going away to prepare a home for his bride, His church.

The Hebrew wedding tradition is also a similitude of the principles of salvation that God has instigated through the Bridegroom, the Messiah Jesus. Through faith in God's plan of redemption, Jesus' atoning death and His resurrection from the dead, we are betrothed to our Bridegroom. We have been baptized as an evidence of our commitment. We are saved at this point under a contract that is so binding that the only way it can be broken is by our unfaithfulness. If we deny our Bridegroom, He will deny us (Matthew 10:33).

There are three stages associated with salvation that relate to the Hebrew marriage tradition, which was also

recognized by the apostles.

*But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who **delivered** us from so great a death, and **does deliver**: in whom we trust that **He will yet deliver us** (II Corinthians 1:9, 10 KJV).*

We are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved when we are retrieved by our Bridegroom, and we receive “the outcome of our faith,” the salvation of our souls (I Peter 1:9). In the meantime during our betrothal period we are being “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time” (I Peter 1:5). The “last time” is a reference to the end when our souls are released from our bodies and our bridegroom has come for us.

**We are saved.** We have been betrothed to Jesus by faith. Again nothing can break this union except our own unfaithfulness and disobedience to His commandment to forgive others (Matthew 6:14,15). If we do not forgive, then our heavenly Father will not forgive us and we cannot be formally married, so to speak.

**We are being saved.** During the engagement period before the Lord returns to gather us into His embrace, we prepare ourselves for our appearance at the judgment seat of Christ where we will give an account of what we have allowed the Holy Spirit to accomplish in us toward the goal of becoming like our Bridegroom (II Corinthians 5:10). The evidence of our development into Christ-likeness is revealed in how we have treated others in our lifetimes on earth (Matthew 25:31-46). This judgment is for rewards for true believers and not condemnation.

**We will be saved.** The third stage is when we receive the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (I Peter 1:9). We have remained faithful during our engagement period, and are figuratively formally “married” when our souls have reached their final destination with our Bridegroom.

So we can prepare for our bridegroom knowing that we are saved in a betrothal that is as binding as the actual marriage. As long as we remain faithful to our Husband and remain in the faith, we can anticipate with

joy, the moment when we hear the angels announce that our Bridegroom is coming.

Your Bridegroom could come for you at any time. Are you ready for that moment? Are you adjusting your spiritual appearance in the looking glass of His words? Do you see the reflection of His character in your own? The degree of love we feel for our Bridegroom, affects the zeal with which we attend to our spiritual development, so we will not be ashamed before Him at His coming (I John 2:28). Read His words, commune with Him in daily prayer. Ask Him for the things you need; the fruits of His Spirit that are so pleasing to Him (Galatians 5:22,23) and He will be faithful in adorning you with those spiritual jewels of His love. What a beautiful bride you will be!

## The Beauty of Holiness

*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name;  
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

– Psalm 29:2

*And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:  
and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yes,  
the work of our hands establish Thou it.- Psalm 90:17*

When we worship the Lord, He has led me to see that He wants us to focus on who He is. When we focus on His attributes in worship; His holiness, purity, mercy, lovingkindness, compassion and every other virtue that His word describes Him as having, then just maybe we may begin to desire to be like our heavenly Father and want Him to create those attributes in ourselves.

Nothing glorifies and pleases God more than when His children exhibit the qualities of His character. And that character is also exemplified in our Messiah Jesus who is the image of God. The selflessness that Jesus exhibited when He willingly submitted to a horrific death on our behalf, is the ultimate reflection of God's perfection.

There is a tremendous freedom when the grip of self is released from our souls.

I remember a conversation I overheard in a restaurant years ago. A joyful looking man was talking with a solemn middle-aged Christian couple. He was also a Christian, and as he spoke to them his face radiated with exuberant joy. He was explaining to them what a blessing it was to be dead to self and alive to Christ. It was wonderful listening to him. Then to my surprise, the couple he had been sharing all this with began to argue with him. I watched them as they spoke in defense of "self." They both looked bound up and miserable. I compared their countenances with the Happy Dead Man. To me, he didn't have to say another word to defend his position. I looked at the joy and peace that was obviously radiating from the Christ that was so alive in his being, and he made me long to be just as dead and alive as he was.

He had learned the truth of the Christian life; when self is made subordinate to God's Spirit, peace, freedom and God's holy fruits of the Spirit are given space to

reign in the soul.

We will never obtain our soul's perfection in this life, but it is the goal of a disciple of Christ to exercise ourselves toward that objective. The Apostle Paul said, in Philippians 3:14 -"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Nothing is holier in this life than a soul that has stripped itself from its own desire and replaced it with a desire for more of the Lord.

When we are made aware of the beauty of the lord and desire those virtues to beautify our beings, then that is when we are truly worshipping God in the beauty of holiness. He beautifies us with those virtues and the works of our hands that He blesses are works that are motivated by what He has implanted within us and He is glorified.

*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  
ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her  
jewels.- Isaiah 61:10*

### Covenant

I have made a covenant with you, says the Lord;  
a covenant of love and mercy.

Be faithful to Me, My bride;

for I am a faithful husband and I will always be  
there for you in times of need.

Job refused to deny Me through his suffering.

I desire the same devotion from you.

The ground of this world that you are standing  
upon will shift, it will always be unstable until I  
come for you and restore the earth with  
My Presence.

Will you fall away from Me if you suffer,  
or can you praise Me through it,  
knowing that I am waiting for you on the other side  
of the fire storm?