

Biblical Lands and Cultures Study – Fall, 2010 Term

Week #10 – No Greater Love – Jewish Wedding Traditions

#	Phase	Description of Stage
1	<i>Erusin</i> - Betrothal	Establishment of marriage covenant (Heb: <i>ketubah</i>) – initiated by the bridegroom with guidance from his father. Due to the young age of the couple (girl 14-15, boy 18-22), Jewish marriages were often arranged totally by their fathers. It was more of a commitment to a binding covenant first, rather than an attraction.
2		Bridegroom travels from his father’s house to the home of the bride, often with his father to guide him.
3		Negotiation with the father of the bride to determine the price (Heb: <i>mohar</i>) for purchase
4		The price is paid – then they are considered man and wife. Bride is Consecrated or sanctified, set apart for her bridegroom. The bride is known as “bought with a price” (see 1 Cor. 6:19-20) before the actual ceremony. If anything happened after this point, a divorce process had to be initiated to stop the marriage (see Matt. 1:18-25)
5		As a sign, the bride and groom would drink from a cup of wine and a betrothal benediction is pronounced. This was known as the “cup of acceptance” where the bride accepted the terms of the marriage covenant.
6	Preparations	Groom returns to his father’s house for a period of about 12 months, but exact time isn’t known by the bride. Typically the bridegroom’s father decides when the time is right and the bridal chamber (Heb: <i>chuppah</i>) is ready.
7		During this time the bride gathers her trousseau and prepares for married life; often during this period if there was any communication between the bride and groom it went through an intermediary (i.e. friends of the bridegroom).
8		The groom prepares a place for them to live in his father’s house, usually a room or rooms added onto the family compound, called the <i>insula</i> . The Jews were very community-oriented and the whole larger family would live, work and celebrate together.
9	<i>Nisuin</i> - Coming Together	When the time was right, the groom would come to take his bride – usually it took place at night. The groom, best man and other escorts would conduct a torch-lit procession to the home of the bride.
10		The groom arrives with a shout or blow of the rams horn (Heb: <i>shofar</i>) so she knows he is coming.
11		The groom receives the bride with her attendants and return to the groom’s father’s house (or <i>insula</i>).
12		At this point, the wedding guests have assembled at the father’s house for the ceremony.
13		Bride and Groom are escorted alone to the bridal chamber (Heb: <i>chuppah</i>) with the bride’s face veiled. This is the Hebrew equivalent of the “Bridal Suite”. There the marriage is consummated physically.

14		After the marriage was consummated, the “friend of the groom” would announce to the members waiting outside that the marriage is finalized. Then the party can begin.
15	Wedding Feast	After this there would be a feast for 7 days, sometimes called “the 7 days of the <i>chuppah</i> ”. During this time, some research maintains that the bride remained “hidden” in the bridal chamber.
16		At the end, the groom brings out his bride with her veil removed so all could see the beautiful bride. At the celebration, bride and groom would again take a cup of wine together as a token that the covenant was now in place.

Notes from the Video

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Selected Verses related to Jewish Marriage and Weddings

Gen 34:12
Exodus 22:16-17
I Sam 18:25
Isaiah 54:5-6
Isaiah 61:10
Isaiah 62:5
Jeremiah 2:32
Hosea 2:16-20
Matt. 1:18-25

Matt. 9:15
Matt 22:1-12
Matt 25:1-10
Mark 2:19-20
Luke 5:34-35
Luke 12:35-40
John 2:1-10
John 3:29-30
John 14:1-4

1 Cor. 6:19-20
2 Cor. 11:2
1 Thess. 4:16-17
Rev. 19:6-9
Rev. 21:2-3
Rev. 21:9
Rev. 22:17

Resources for Additional Study

Book

Sketches of Jewish Social Life by Alfred Edersheim, D. D., Ph. D., Hendrickson Publishers (1994) ISBN: 978-1565631380

Especially Chapter 9 - Mothers, Daughters, and Wives in Israel; Book is available on Amazon.com and BarnesAndNoble.com

Entire Text of book is also available online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/sketches.html>

Direct Link to Chapter 9: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/sketches.xi.html>

Websites for further study

Jewish Wedding Traditions

<http://www.followtherabbi.com/Brix?pageID=2092>

<http://www.zionistmall.com/minhag.htm>

http://www.biblestudymanuals.net/jewish_marriage_customs.htm

<http://messianicfellowship.50webs.com/wedding.html>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/smiths-bible-dictionary/marriage.html>

[http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Relationships/Spouses and Partners/About Marriage/Ancient Jewish Marriage.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Relationships/Spouses_and_Partners/About_Marriage/Ancient_Jewish_Marriage.shtml)

http://www.yeshuatyisrael.com/messiah_wedding%201.htm

<http://www.yeshuatyisrael.com/PDF/The%20Messiah%20and%20the%20Jewish%20Wedding.pdf>

Main Resources: <http://www.followtherabbi.com>

Good Shepherd Education Website: <http://goodshepherdpceducation.blogspot.com/>

(or www.gspc.net and click on "Christian Education blog" link on the left side; then click on The World of the Bible Class Link on left)