

The Jewish Wedding – Revelation 19: 7-10

The Ketubah - Betrothal

- There is a payment of the purchase price – the dowry (Hebrew: *mohar*) – *Acts 20: 28; 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20; Titus 2: 14*
 - The dowry is paid to the Bride's father as a pledge (Hebrew: *kiddushin*)
 - A blessing is said over a cup of wine
- A marriage contract (Hebrew: *kettubah*) is drawn up and signed, by the Bride and Bridegroom and ten witnesses – it is left with the Bride as a surety that the promises will be kept
 - In the betrothal the *kettubah* (marriage contract) contains the promises of inheritance as the Bridegroom's Bride
- The Bride is set apart (Hebrew: *kiddushin*) – as Christ's bride is to be set apart, sanctified, made holy
 - Violation of this was regarded as adultery – *Isaiah 49: 18, 61: 10; Jeremiah 2: 32; Psalm 45: 8-15*

The Bridegroom departs to the Father's house

- Whilst separated the Bridegroom and Bride are considered as betrothed to each other – in recognition of which the Bride wears a veil
- The Bridegroom will send the bride 'love gifts' during this period – this speaks of Christ sending the Church the Holy Spirit
- Leaving the Bride – set apart, sanctified, patiently waiting – *Song of Songs 7: 10, 4: 12; Hosea 2: 19*
- The Bridegroom goes to prepare a place for His Bride – often by adding another room to the Father's house – *John 14: 2-3*
- The Bride prepares for the Bridegroom's imminent return
 - The Bride does not know when this return will be
 - The Bride has to be ready

The Bride (Hebrew: *kallah*)

- Wears white, dressed modestly – symbolic of purity – *Revelation 19: 7-8*
- She takes a *mikvah* (ritual bathing) before the wedding ceremony – symbolic of the water baptism of believers – and perfumes herself in precious oils – *2 Corinthians 2: 15*
- The Bride has assistants to help her prepare for the Bridegroom's return – *Matthew 25: 1-10*

The Bridegroom (Hebrew: *khatan*)

- He wears a white kippah (head covering) – symbolic of his submission to God and that he will be a covering for his bride
- He would also wear a tallit (prayer shawl)
- Both Bride and Bridegroom would fast before the wedding
- The room that the Bridegroom has prepared for his Bride has to be approved by his Father before he goes for the Bride – *Matthew 24: 36*
- The Bridegroom is asked by his ten male witnesses if he is prepared to fulfil his obligations to his Bride as stated in the *ketubah*
- The Bridegroom is then escorted to his Bride with much singing and dancing and rejoicing

The Wedding (Hebrew: *nesuin*)

- When the Bridegroom is close to the Bride's home his entourage shouts '*Hine Ha'khatan*' ('Here comes the Bridegroom') and a shofar is blown
 - *1 Thessalonians 4: 16*
- The Bridegroom comes for His Bride – *Jeremiah 7: 34, 16: 9, 25: 10; Psalm 45: 8-15*
- It is a surprise gathering – it was often in the night – *Matthew 25: 1-13*
- The Bridegroom lifts the veil of the bride – to ensure she is his bride – *Genesis 29: 21-25*
- The Wedding Ceremony (*nesuin*) would take place in late afternoon or early evening
 - The ceremony is performed underneath a huppah (covering) which is either a white cloth with floral decoration or a tallit – *Psalm 19: 5*
 - The *huppah* represents the Bridegroom's house (heaven) and is called a 'love canopy'
 - The Bride walks around the Bridegroom seven times (*Jeremiah 31: 22*) – seven times in the Torah it is written "And when a man takes a wife"
 - The officiating Rabbi then recites *Psalm 118*, pronounces a blessing over the wine and recites *Birchat Hatanim* (nuptial blessing), and the couple then drink from the same cup
 - A ring is given by the Bridegroom to the Bride – and he declares to her "Behold, you are consecrated to me by this ring, according to the ritual of Moses and Israel"
 - The ring is often inscribed with *Song of Songs 6: 3* "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the lilies"
 - Seven blessings (*Sheva B'rachot* or *Birkot Nisuin*) are recited over the couple
 - The *Ketubah* (marriage contract) is then read and presented to the Bride
 - The Bridegroom then smashes a glass with his foot – symbolising
 - Remembrance of the destruction of the Temple in 70AD
 - *Kristallnacht* and the *Shoah*
 - The irrevocable nature of the marriage covenant – *Genesis 2: 24*
- Following the wedding there is much rejoicing and dancing through the streets as the wedding party goes to the banquet

The Seven Day Marriage Supper

- Newly-weds go to the *yihud* (solitary place) – a marriage chamber where traditionally the marriage was consummated, but today it is usually a private room where the couple end their fast together and spend some time alone
- Celebrating the wedding – *Judges 14: 12; Matthew 9: 15, 22: 11; John 2: 1*
- Again the seven blessings are recited over the couple at the end of the festive meal
- The Bridegroom and Bride are treated as king and queen and welcomed into the groom's home – *Song of Songs 2: 4; Revelation 19: 7-8; 7: 9-10; 21: 3*

See CFI Booklet: 'The Jewish Wedding & The Lord's Return' by Pam Bird