

The Bride of Christ

Matthew 25:1-13

Introduction: Jesus often used weddings as illustrations in his teachings. For example, the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) illustrates our wedding to Christ by using the bride maid's preparations for a common Jewish wedding. Similarly, the Jewish wedding ceremony illustrates the Church's wedding to Christ. The same steps that a Jewish bridegroom took to procure his wife are the same steps Christ took to procure His Church.

I. Once a bride was identified, a price (*mohar*) had to be paid.

A. The *mohar* was usually presented to the bride's father. It was compensation for the loss of his daughter. In the event of the husband's death, the *mohar* was used to support his daughter as a widow. The *mohar* could be very costly. It could be paid in money or in exchange for services (as Jacob did for Leah and Rachel).

B. Similarly, Jesus paid that price (the *mohar*) with his own blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:25).

II. The bride would enter a covenant with her betrothed.

A. The bride was betrothed by the promise (covenant) to marry. They were regarded as husband and wife though no physical union had taken place (Matt. 1:18). The betrothal lasted one year.

1. During this time the groom (Christ) would return to his home (heaven) to prepare his father's house for the bride (John 14:2-3).

2. In turn, the bride (the church) would prepare the wedding clothes for the ceremony (Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 3:3-5; 19:7-8).

B. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper notice what the cup represented (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). The cup represents the new covenant with the Church that He paid for with His blood.

C. The covenant was a legally binding contract that could be broken by adultery (Matt. 1:19; 19:9; Heb. 10:29).

III. When ready, the bridegroom returns for his bride.

A. Traditionally, the groom will come at night and at a time unbeknownst to the bride (1 Thess. 5:2).

B. The groom will declare his presence with a shout (Matt. 25:6; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

C. He conducts a torch lit procession to his father's house (Matt. 25:1; 2 Pet. 3:10-14).

D. Notice how John describes the Church on this occasion (Rev. 21:2).

IV. The wedding feast.

A. The main ceremony was the entry of the bride into the bridegroom's home. Once the bride and groom arrive at his father's house, they preside over a wedding feast prepared by his father which could last for a very long time.

B. The application to the Parable of the Wedding Feast is undeniable (Matt. 22:2-14).

Conclusion: The groom is Christ, the bride is the Church, and the Church will be composed of those who have obtained eternal salvation (2 Cor. 5:1-2ff; Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:12, 14, 20, 27).

Are your garments ready? Are you prepared for the groom when he will return to take you to an eternal home prepared in the heavens?