

Jesus is the Groom

Isa 62:4 *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*

Hos 2:19 *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.*

First we have to return to the culture and customs of Palestine to understand this. The men of that time had relationships with slaves and others, even prostitutes, and also took women (wives or concubines) in their home to establish relationships with them. There were wives with full rights to command in the home as the man, and there were concubines (like the two of Jacob) who were really servants of the wife, but also had physical relations with the man of the house. A concubine did not have the right to act and command as a wife. When a man took a woman as a wife, it was an honor that he raised her to being almost an equal with him in the affairs of the house (we remember that society there revolved around men).

Being a woman without having a man at that time was a big problem, because man was the one who had the rights in society, and who could provide and protect. Our relationship with God is like that, we are helpless, and Jesus came to establish a loving relationship with us, including provision and protection.

The Obligation and Time of Hope

Being a "boyfriend" is really something of recent society. In Israel, they engaged in a meeting at the woman's house, and they separate and don't see each other for a year. More than anything, this is to give the union the view of cleanliness, in which it is obvious that the woman is not already pregnant, and the marriage is not forced "because they have

to do it". It is the same in the story of Joseph and Mary. They were committed, but they had not consummated the relationship because the year has not run its course.

The Bride is Preparing

In this year the woman is dedicated to prepare herself (especially her dress **Eph 5:27** *That he might present it to himself... not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*). It's the only thing really that she has to worry about or deal with "now" at this time. This parallels our work on earth. We are to strive to develop the moral character of Jesus (God) in us. **1John 3:2** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* We are waiting for the return of Jesus Christ, and we have the task of preparing ourselves spiritually so to cleanse us from sin. It is not a good work we do to "buy" salvation, but it is a natural consequence when one loves Jesus. **1John 4:17** *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.* The Apostle John gives us a stern warning to remain in Christ **1John 2:28** *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* The nuisance and great danger here is that the bride does not pay attention to her task, and does not strive to be pure and without blemish. This will cause us shame on the day of His return. **1John 3:2** *every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* **2Tim 4:8**... *there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord...shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

The Groom Prepares

The man prepares a new house for him and his wife to be. **John 14:2** *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. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Our future "new life" with God in heaven needs preparation, and Jesus Christ is now in heaven preparing all this for us. Also, when God will end this relationship with the redeemed (they formally marry, and the bride becomes the wife) then God and his wife will live in "the new house" that God will make.

This probably also has to do with **Rev 21:1-4, 9-10** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth... the holy city, new Jerusalem... prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them... I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife...*

The Hope and the Anticipation

Matt 25:13 *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Luke 12:40)*

Heb 10:37 *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

Rev 22: 7, 12, 20 *Behold, I come quickly*

1Cor 1:7 *So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

According to the customs of the Jews, when more or less the year of waiting ends, the bridegroom will arrive at the bride's house, probably at night or early morning, and will take her to their new home. It was something of a game that the bridegroom comes when the bride and the others waiting would least expect it (**Mat 24:36, 44** *"the hour no one knows"*), to try to find her not ready and "surprise her". His arrival and transfer to the new house is very fast (**Mt 24:27, Luke 17:24** *"like the lightning"*).

The main point here is that it is a very important event, which deserves a lot of attention until it dominates one's life to ensure this. Everything else was secondary to watching for this moment of glory when he "comes" and they begin their life together. **Mark 13:26** *...the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory..* For example, in the parable of the 10 virgins, they were called to await the arrival of the newly married couple *at the grooms house). Then everyone is called to watch (**Mat 24:42-51** *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such*

an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.). It's a promise that he will come back, but his return is really not the right focus. The emphasis and correct focus is that he will return to rescue her from her helpless life, and to take her with him. **Mar 13:26.** **Mat 24:37-41** "one shall be taken." **Jn 14:3** *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* This is the same as in a marriage, wherever the man goes, his wife will be with him. It is both a rescue of "being helpless," that is, to join her with the boyfriend. The idea of a boyfriend coming for his girlfriend is to meet her and he will live with her forever together in happiness. It is the main focus of life, and it is a new life, a total change of life for the bride.

The Rapture. The concept of the "rapture" of the church is exactly what the focus is here. A rapture is to be taken outside, someone grabs you and takes you elsewhere. This event will be "as a thief in the night" (**1Tes 5:2**). **1Ts 4:17** *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Protection from the Wrath of God. God is "angry against sin" every day (**Ps 7:11**), and his patience is not forever. One day, God will judge the world. Our bridal relationship (the church) with Christ (the bridegroom) is one in which He will protect us from all evil. This protection is especially from the wrath of God on this day of judgment. **Eph 4:30** *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* **1Thess 1:10** *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* Then the love relationship between us and God, if we exalt Jesus to be our only hope and Savior, is what qualifies us to be saved from the wrath to come. **Rom 5:9** *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* **1Thess 5:9** *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

A Change of Life. **2Co 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* It is an event and reality that demands a change in how one lives in the light of his eminence (he is to come very soon). The Christian lives in a way that he is always good or ready to be taken. There are no sins or duties that one would like to fix before leaving if Jesus comes suddenly. Always your life is in order, everything as it should be. **Mt 24:44** *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

Source of Joy. The Bible presents us with the soon coming return of the Lord for us, and this is the anticipation and joy that must fill our hearts as we work on our task. In **Jer 25:10** it speaks of the punishment that God was going to do to Israel for not having a good relationship with God, what God takes away from them. **Jer 25:10** *Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.*

The Earnest of the Holy Spirit

Ef 1:13... *after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

God makes us a relationship, with the hope or anticipation of consuming this relationship as a marriage. The advance (arras) is the Holy Spirit dwelling within us until that day and moment of consummation.

The Symbols of Jesus Christ: Christ the Groom

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God uses symbols to instruct us better. A symbol is an earthly reality that is very similar in a point or more to a spiritual or celestial reality. God Himself chose the relationship and situation of two young people in the time before marrying to describe His relationship with the redeemed. For God, there are very common elements, and we can learn a lot from our relationship with Christ if we reflect on this symbolism. The main thing about this symbol is the intimate relationship between the two, and above all, they are in a relationship that makes them both very happy with each other, and with this relationship. Happiness and joy are always part of this situation and relationship. It is also a time of anticipation, because the wedding approximates what will be even more happiness and joy.