

Ministry of Grace Church

Get Ready, Get Set Sermon Notes



Jewish Wedding

Are there any correlations between Jewish traditions and the church? I think there are, and I believe you will too after you hear this message. Let's do a bit of spiritual sleuthing. For starters let's look at the traditional Jewish wedding. The central text of Jewish theology, the Talmud, specifies that the way a bride is acquired by a groom involves the groom leaving his father's home and traveling to the bride's home to "purchase" her for a price. The groom gives a token or a dowry. Its value must be known to the bride, and the bride must also give her consent. The marriage contract is then established, and from that moment on the bride is sanctified, or set apart, exclusively for her bridegroom. It is customary for the groom and bride to then drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction has been said.

This prenuptial process is a picture of our betrothal to Christ. Jesus left the home of His Father and traveled to the home of His prospective Bride (the church) to purchase her for a price; that is, His own blood (1 Corinthians 7:23). Then, when His Bride consents to the match (by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior), He gives her a priceless token, the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6-16). With the establishment of this covenant, Jesus's Bride is sanctified (set-apart) for Him (1 Corinthians 6:11), and our communion cup is symbolic of the covenant by which Christ obtained His Bride.

Jewish law defines two stages of marriage: the betrothal and the consummation. The betrothal is not engagement as we understand it. It is a binding agreement in which the woman is legally considered the wife of the man. It was routine in Jesus' day for the betrothal and the consummation to be separated by as much as a year. During that time the bridegroom would construct the marital home.

This, too, can be seen as symbolic of Christ's work on our behalf. After sealing the covenant with the Church, Jesus ascended to His Father's home to prepare a dwelling place. Just prior to His death, He told His disciples,

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for 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).

After the marital home is completed, the groom must return for his bride. However, he doesn't know when it will happen because his father decides when he will return for her.

When that time comes, the groom returns for his bride, accompanied by escorts. Since the exact time of his arrival was not known in advance, the groom's arrival is announced with a shout. Now, consider this, the church's Bridegroom has been separated from His bride for nearly 2,000 years, and one day He will come for her and snatch her from the earth to meet Him in the air (1 [Thessalonians 4:13-18](#)). His arrival will be announced with a shout and a trumpet blast. But we don't know exactly when this will happen.

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. ([Mark 13:32](#))

After being whisked from her home, the Jewish bride was to remain hidden in the house of the groom's father for seven days where the marriage was consummated. Similarly, the Church will remain "hidden" for a period of seven years, during the tribulation period. After the seven days, the Jewish bride would leave the bridal chamber unveiled; likewise, after seven years the Church will return to earth with Christ, in full view of all ([Colossians 3:4](#)).

Jewish Holy Days (Feasts)

Now, let's look at the holy days of Israel, also called the Levitical Feasts. There are seven of these feasts. The Hebrew word for "feasts" (*moadim*) literally means "appointed times." God has carefully planned and orchestrated the timing and sequence of each of these seven feasts to reveal to us a special story. They are still celebrated by observant Jews today. Notice, however, that for both Jews and non-Jews who have placed their faith in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, these special days demonstrate the complete work of redemption through God's Son.

The first four of these feasts occur during the springtime: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Weeks (the last day of which is called Pentecost). All of the Spring feasts were fulfilled by Christ at His first coming. The final three feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles) are all fall feasts. These fall feasts have not yet been fulfilled by Jesus. However, the "blessed hope" ([Titus 2:13](#)) for all believers in Jesus Christ is that they most assuredly will be fulfilled. As the four spring feasts were fulfilled literally and right on the actual feast days during Christ's first coming, these three fall feasts will be fulfilled literally and right on the actual feast days as part of the Lord's second coming.

Here is a summary of the seven Levitical feasts of Israel and their prophetic significance.

1. Passover - This is a commemoration of the time when the Israelites were being freed from Egyptian slavery. On the day that they left Egypt, they were to take a lamb from their flock and observed it for three days to ensure that it was without spot or blemish. Then they were to sacrifice the lamb at 3:00 PM and sprinkled its blood on the sides and top of the doorway into their homes. That night, the death angel went throughout Egypt and killed all the firstborn of every household that did not have the blood on their doorway.

Jesus was crucified on the annual day of the Passover. He died at 3:00 PM. He is the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the whole world. The original Passover was a celebration of the release of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. The death of Jesus on the Passover secures our freedom from the slavery to sin.

2. Unleavened Bread – This symbolizes the removal of sins. It begins on the day after the Passover and lasts for one whole week. Jews are required to go throughout their house and get rid of all leavening agents (yeast) and anything that contains leaven.

Jesus lived a completely sinless life. Yet, in [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) we are told, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us..." Therefore, His lying in the tomb during the initial 3 days of

the Feast of Unleavened Bread fulfills the requirement to get leaven, which represents sin, completely out of our lives.

3. First Fruits –The Feast of First Fruits is celebrated on the Sunday after Passover, to honor the first fruits of the barley harvest. In ancient Israel, this was a thanksgiving offering of the early crops given to God so that He would provide a bountiful harvest of the rest of the crop. For Christians, this feast is symbolically represented by Jesus Christ's resurrection on Easter, the "first fruits" of resurrection.
4. Pentecost – This is the feast of *Shavuot*, meaning “weeks.” This commemorates the day that Moses received the Law on Mt. Sinai which was 50 days after the Israelites left Egypt. In the New Testament, it is the day that the Holy Spirit was given to the church. ([Acts 2:1-4](#))

Then, after Pentecost, there is a pause until Fall. This represents the long time between Jesus’s first and second advents (the church age).

5. Trumpets – Yom Teruah – Rosh Hashanah
The Hebrew trumpet is called a Shofar. It is made from a ram’s horn. In [Leviticus 23:24](#) the Israelites were commanded to blow the shofar to assemble the people together. For Christians, it is a call to assemble the church together to God. Many Christians believe that the rapture will occur on Yom Teruah.

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ([1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#))

As a foreshadow of the rapture, a trumpet call was also used by God to call Moses up to Mt. Sinai to receive the Law. At that time God came down to the top of the mountain and called Moses up to Him.

And the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder; *then* Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. And Yahweh came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. ([Exodus 19:19-20](#))

There are 10 days from Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashanah) to Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). These 10 days include the 2 days of Rosh Hashanah, plus seven days for repentance and cleansing, plus the Day of Atonement. These 10 days are known as The Days of Awe. During this time, the Jews were to humble themselves before God and repent.

The seven days of repentance and cleansing correspond to the seven years of Tribulation in which mankind will be humbled before God and prepared for His return.

6. The Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur - For the Jews, the Day of Atonement was the day a blood sacrifice was made to atone for the sins of the Jewish people. This is the day that Jesus will return to earth (His 2nd coming) to set-up His kingdom (the Millennial Kingdom). At His coming, He will perform the Sheep and Goat judgment spoken of in [Matthew 25:31-46](#).
7. Tabernacles – Sukkot – On this day, the Israelites were to construct temporary structures (booths) outside and live in them for seven days. This is a picture of the Millennial Kingdom (God will tabernacle among us).

Essene Calendar

In the first century there were three primary sects of Judaism. You are probably familiar with the first two, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The third sect was the Essenes. Their calendar was based on the sun whereas the Judaic calendar was based on the moon. Because the Essene calendar was based on the sun, the Essenes were sometimes called the Sons of Light. And - because the Pharisees used a calendar which was based on the moon, the Essenes called the Pharisees the Sons of Darkness. The Pharisees despised the Essenes and literally sought to kill them, which is one reason why they fled to Qumran in the desert. The Essenes were mostly focused on studying the prophetic writings and preserving the writings of their fathers. They had communities across Judea, with their most famous settlement being at Qumran near the Dead Sea.

The Essene calendar was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. This calendar has kept track of time and events since creation. The phrase used for tracking time since creation is Anno Mundi (in the year of the world), According to the Essenes, this was the calendar which God ordained at creation. In **Exodus 12:2**, God instituted the Passover and said, “this month shall be your beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you.” This means that God ordained the Jewish calendar to begin in the Spring, around the time of Passover.

Before Jesus was born, the Essenes prophesied that the Jews would completely abandon God’s original solar calendar for the pagan lunar calendar. This happened during the time of the Babylonian captivity because the Babylonian empire required taxes to be paid according to their calendar. The Essene calendar has some interesting dates. For example, on the Essene calendar, Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was born in the year 1948 A.M. (Anno Mundi) On the Gregorian calendar, the Jewish nation of Israel was reformed by the United Nations about 4,000 years later, in the year 1948 A.D. The Essene calendar also predicted the birth of the Messiah at approximately the time that Jesus was born.

Many of the Essenes believed that humanity would only survive for 7,000 years. The first 6,000 would be all of human history before the Millennial Reign, which would be the last 1,000 years of human history. Therefore, it was important for them to know the times and seasons in which they were living.

The Essenes also had a sundial which was used along with their calendar. The sundial not only kept track of years and centuries, it also kept track of the 50-year Jubilee cycle. This sundial tracked a total of 70 centuries from creation (7,000 years).

The Essene calendar and sundial calculated time based on these time periods:

- A Shemitah equals 7 years
- A Jubilee cycle equals 50 Years (ending on the year following the 7th Shemitah)
- An Onah equals 500 years (which equals 10 Jubilee cycles)
- An Age equals 2,000 years (which equals 4 Onahs or 40 Jubilee cycles)
- At the end of the 3rd age (6,000 years), there will have been 120 Jubilee cycles.

According to calculations done on the Essene calendar by scholars, the year 2025, is 5,950 A.M., the beginning of the 120th Jubilee cycle.

Current World Events

Now, let’s take just a few minutes to look at some of the current events in the world. There are two primary nations in the world that are based on anti-God philosophies. Russia and China. Russia is currently on the brink of bankruptcy because Ukraine is methodically destroying its oil depots and refineries. They had built their economy on their sale of petroleum products to other nations. Because of the Western embargoes and the Ukraine war, they now are in dire financial straits. For instance, in Russia,

the price of gasoline has reached the equivalent of \$4.00 US per gallon. That doesn't seem like a lot to us because we have been paying that much for some time now. However, the average household income in Russia is less than 25% of the average household income in the US. In other words, the Russians are spending four times as much of their income on gasoline and heating oil as we are.

Also, China's currency is on a steep decline because of the collapse of their real estate market. Many people in China have bought real estate speculatively, borrowing large sums of money to purchase homes that have not even been built yet. And – since the developers can no longer afford to build these buildings, they have abandoned the projects half finished. This is resulting in so many mortgage defaults that the Chinese banking industry is on the brink of collapse itself.

Jesus' disciples asked him, "... Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3)

The first thing Jesus warned them about was ...

"See to it that no one deceives you."

I don't know if you have noticed it or not, but deception seems to be on the rise today. All you have to do is read the political headlines and that becomes obvious. Then Jesus warned of wars and rumors of wars. He said, nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

So What?

You don't have to be a Biblical Scholar to recognize that the very things that Jesus prophesied about the end times are occurring all around us today. I have been saying for some time that I believe the Rapture could happen any day now. The feast of trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) will occur later this month during the 120th Jubilee year. The sound of the shofar on the Feast of Trumpets this year could be what Paul was referring to:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

But wait! Didn't Jesus say, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." Yes, that's what He said in Matthew 24:36. But, perhaps Jesus was giving us all a clue as to when it would happen. The first indication of this is the fact that it was a common idiom for a man who was betrothed to a woman when asked when the wedding was going to take place to answer, "No man knows the day or the hour, only my father." The second reason that this might have been a clue lies in the fact that Rosh Hashanah is a 2-day feast. It is the only one of the feasts that occurs on the first day of a month. On the Hebrew calendar, the first day of the month is always a New-Moon and it could not be confirmed until 2 Rabbinic witnesses both saw the first faint sliver of the moon. Because of this the feast could occur on either of two days. Also, this feast was commonly referred to as the feast about which no man knows the day or the hour.

Therefore, the Rapture of the church could be very soon!. But - don't be afraid, be excited! Our Bridegroom is coming for us, and it could be just a couple of weeks away. So - let me give you a glimpse of what will take place immediately after we are snatched away. The first thing will be the Bema Seat judgment where we will be rewarded for all the things that we have done for God during our lifetime. Even though it is called the Bema Seat **Judgment**, or the **Judgment** Seat of Christ, it is not a judgment of condemnation. Remember, our sins have been covered by the blood of Christ and He has declared

each and every Christian as righteous, that is, without sin. The Bema Seat is a judgment of our works, those things which we have done for Him. It is at the Bema Seat of Christ that we will receive our crowns.

After the Bema Seat Judgment will be the wedding ceremony. Imagine how lavish that will be. The wedding of the son of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. After the ceremony we will be enthroned to watch the seven-year Tribulation. In **Revelation 4:4**, John describes:

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and upon those thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. (**Revelation 4:4**)

The 24 elders are all clothed in white, which is an indication of complete righteousness and purity. Also, the only ones in the heavenly realm who are said to wear crowns are the church. Therefore, we, the church, are these 24 elders, the Bride of Christ.

So ----- If the Rapture does occur later this month, are you ready? This is really a question that every Christian should be asking himself or herself each and every day. However, already too many of our days have gone by, and they won't return. Let's not waste our remaining days. So, the most important question for everyone of us is, "Are you really saved?"

But, how do I know if I am really saved?

Signs that you are saved

Here are three signs that you are a Born-again Christian

1. Your relationship with sin has changed since you got saved. The things that used to cause you joy and satisfaction, now grieve you. That doesn't mean that you no longer sin. It means that you can't live a life of sinfulness and be comfortable. It means that when you do sin, you want to confess it to God.

If you still crave sinfull activities and they still give you joy without regret, you may not be saved.

2. You have a growing love for God. You want to know Him better, you want to please Him, and you want to obey Him. You love God more than power, glory, or wealth.

If your life focus is still on stuff and your zeal for the Lord has disappeared, you may not be saved.

3. The fruit that you produce in your life is godly, showing genuine love for others. This is not a state of perfection, but a progression.

If you have no desire to do good for others, if your life focus is "do unto others before they do unto you," you may not be saved.

Have you submitted your will to God? Is Jesus Christ your Lord, your Master, your Owner, and Savior? If you are a genuine Christian then your lifestyle should show it. So, are you living for Him, or are you living for yourself? There is still time. The trumpet hasn't sounded yet. Let's all humble ourselves before God and seek His guidance for every day we have left on this earth. After all,

He is worthy!