

# Triennial Torah Study – 4<sup>th</sup> Year 06/07/2013



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<https://sightedmoon.com/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf>

Deut 25	2 Chron 6-8		Rev 1-2
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## Levirate Marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-19)

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 addresses a statute that had unique application to ancient Israel. Now called the law of levirate marriage, from the Latin word levir, meaning “brother-in-law,” it stated that if a married man died without children, his widow was to be married to his brother (her brother-in-law), or his nearest of kin if there was no brother, and the first child of this new union was to be regarded as the offspring of the deceased husband (compare Genesis 38:9; Matthew 22:24).

This was to be done so that the name of the dead brother would “not be blotted out of Israel.” It also ensured that the widow would continue to be provided for. Obviously, then, this could have put certain economic strain on the levir, particularly if he already had a family, as he had to provide for a wife and for the raising of a child until that child was old enough and independent enough to carry on the name of his “father” on his own. The nearest of kin could, however, refuse to take the widow as his wife, although he would have to go through a humiliating process in which everyone saw his selfishness in being more concerned for himself than for his extended family (verses 9-10). In the case of Ruth in the biblical book bearing her name, her deceased husband's closest relative refused to marry her, so that Boaz, the next in line on the kinship list, was free to do so (Ruth 3:13; 4:1-9).

The law of levirate marriage is not applicable in the Church today. One reason is that a literal application of it would often require a converted brother-in-law to marry an unconverted sister-in-law, or vice versa, which would be contrary to 1 Corinthians 7:39 and 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Also, if the brother-in-law were already married, the application of this law would violate the biblical teaching (discussed earlier) that a man is to be the husband of only one wife. As this is specifically mandated in the New Testament for ministers and deacons, it is understood to be binding upon all men in the Church.

## Temple Dedication Completed (2 Chronicles 7:1-10; 1 Kings 8:54-66)

Solomon's prayer was answered in the most miraculous of ways—a bolt of fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifices on the altar. Also, “the glory of the LORD filled the temple” (2 Chronicles 7:1)—the awesome radiant cloud of God's presence. Thereupon the king and the elders of Israel dedicated the temple by offering sacrifices in abundance and with great joy. Following the initial days of dedication came the Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day. And Solomon “sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.” This event marks one of the few times that Israel was in harmony with God, joyful in their portion and grateful to their God.

### **Solomon's Other Works (2 Chronicles 8; 1 Kings 9:10-28)**

Solomon's other works consisted largely of building projects in various cities, securing Israel's frontiers and building an institutionalized army. He seized Hamath Zobah, a region on Israel's northeast border containing two cities, Hamath and Zobah, the former of which had formerly been friendly with David but now, given its association with Zobah, had probably switched allegiance. He built Tadmor in the wilderness (called by the Romans Palmyra) in a fertile oasis just to the southeast of Zobah. He built Hazor in northern Israel upon the high ground overlooking Lake Merom. He rebuilt Gezer in Ephraim, which had been attacked and burned by Pharaoh, its Canaanite inhabitants exterminated, and then given to his daughter as a gift upon her marriage to Solomon. He rebuilt upper and lower Beth Horon, two cities located in Ephraim and separated by about two miles. He refortified Baalath in Dan. And he rebuilt or fortified Megiddo, which occupied a strategic position on the Plain of Esdraelon on the border of Issachar and Mannaseh. As may be seen from the list of localities, Solomon directed his attention to securing Israel's northern borders. This is also evidence that tends to confirm our understanding of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh as an alliance with Egypt to diminish or eliminate a threat from Israel's south.

In addition, Solomon built the Millo, apparently a landfill between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, thereby reducing the valley between the two prominences. And he greatly extended the wall of Jerusalem, finally fully enclosing both the lower city and the upper city.

As is well known, Israel did not exterminate all the gentile inhabitants of the land when Joshua brought Israel across Jordan. These people continued to live in the land. Solomon conscripted these peoples into forced labor for his many building projects.

Additionally, Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh into her new residence. Formerly she had dwelt in the lower city of Jerusalem, but not in the house of David for, since the Ark of the Covenant had been there, Solomon felt that this gentile woman's presence in a place hallowed by the ark would have been unacceptable. This is evidence that the daughter of Pharaoh was not fully converted to the worship of God, otherwise she would have been esteemed an Israelite and able to partake of all the privileges of an Israelite. Her presence would not have been defiling.

Solomon also installed the system of worship that David had defined for the temple. The priesthood served by courses assigned to the major houses of the sons of Aaron. The proper sacrifices were offered on all the days observed by Israel—weekly Sabbaths, monthly new moons, and annual feasts. Thus was everything set in its place for the continual and orderly worship of God in His temple.

The final record in this section concerns the ports of Ezion Geber near Elath on Israel's extreme southeastern border upon the "Red Sea"—actually the Gulf of Aqaba, a "finger" of the Red Sea. Here a fleet of ships was built and manned under a joint venture between Solomon and Hiram. This southern seaport would serve as Israel's major port of entry and the point of departure for Ophir (the location of which is still in dispute). Such southern trade was extremely lucrative, and the fact that the Phoenician Hiram, king of Tyre, was engaged with Solomon at this port far removed from Tyre is one more piece of evidence that Israel was far from a landlocked little country notable only for its preoccupation with monotheism, as some scholars habitually picture it. Israel was in alliance with the Phoenicians, and the worldwide trading empire we know as the Phoenician Empire was at that time actually an IsraelitePhoenician union.

Interestingly, as pointed out previously in the Bible Reading Program comments on Exodus 13:17-14:30, the Hebrew term translated "Red Sea" in verse 26 is Yam Suf (supposedly literally "Sea of Reeds")—the same name given in the book of Exodus to the body of water that Moses and the Israelites crossed. The fact that a finger of the Red Sea could bear this name disproves the idea taught by many that Yam Suf must refer to a swamp or marshy lake with reed plants like cattails, rushes and papyrus. Evidently, Yam Suf can also mean "Sea of Seaweed," as suf obviously means seaweed in Jonah 2:5.

## **Revelation**

– Introduction (<http://www.blainerobison.com/endtimes/rev-hebrew.htm>)

It is important to note that the Book of Revelation is written from an Hebraic perspective. So, below are some proofs worth noting as an introduction to this book.

Revelation: A Hebrew Book

Numbers in brackets link to notes at the end of the article.

Few Gentiles when reading Revelation (or any other book of the New Testament) stop to consider that the "New Testament is a Jewish book, written by Jews,[1] largely about Jews, and meant for both Jews and Gentiles." [2] The religion, traditions and concepts of the New Testament are thoroughly Hebrew. [3] The Jewishness of the apostolic writings is certainly evident in the cultural setting of the historical events and characters, but the Hebrew identity is especially manifest in both their terminology and the commonality of content with the Tanakh (Old Testament). Moreover, the incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus, in the flesh was and is a Jew and would have naturally spoken to His disciples in their native language, traditions and

Scriptures. Indeed, as one Messianic Rabbi pointed out, Hebrew is the only language in Scripture that God used to speak audibly.

Many Gentile commentators assume that the language behind the Greek words on the lips of Jesus and the apostles to be Aramaic instead of Hebrew, based on the incidence of a few Aramaic words in the Greek New Testament text.[4] The field of literary criticism generally assumes that Hebrew was essentially unused outside of rabbinic circles.[5] However, Jewish scholars have presented strong arguments for the vitality and preeminence of the Hebrew language in first century Jewish life, as well as religious writings and discourse.[6] David Stern quotes Professor David Flusser, Orthodox Jewish scholar in Jerusalem,

“The spoken languages of that period [first century] were Hebrew, Aramaic, and to an extent Greek. ... It is possible that Jesus did, from time to time, make use of the Aramaic language.

But during that period Hebrew was both the daily language and the language of study. The Gospel of Mark contains a few Aramaic words, and this is what has misled scholars. ... There is thus no ground for assuming that Jesus did not speak Hebrew; and when we are told (Acts 21:40) that Paul spoke Hebrew, we should take this piece of information at face value.”[7]

There are a variety of ways in which Hebrew may be seen as the foundation to the Greek text of Revelation and these are noted throughout this commentary.[8] First, there are many Hebrew words that are transliterated into Greek. Transliteration is the attempt to reproduce the sound of a word with the substitution of letters of the target language for the letters of the source language without interpreting the meaning. Examples of transliteration from Hebrew to

Greek in Revelation include the words “amen,” “Armageddon,” “Hebrew,” “Jerusalem,” “Jew,” “Satan,” “woe” and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The second evidence of the Hebrew language is the presence of idiomatic words and phrases, which scholars call Hebraisms. An idiom is simply an expression peculiar to a particular language. For example, the phrase “the small and the great,” which occurs four times in Revelation (11:18; 13:16; 19:5, 18), actually refers to the young and the old rather than social or economic status. The titles of our Lord reflect the variety of expressions that packaged Jewish theology about God (1:4, 8; 4:8f; 15:3; 16:5; 21:6). Many of the idioms that Jesus used and are recorded in the Gospels can only be properly understood when interpreted in their Hebrew context.[9] Because of the presence of Hebrew idiomatic expressions, some commentators have erroneously concluded a dependence on rabbinic Judaism as if Jesus and the apostles simply plagiarized rabbinic teachings without giving them credit. It is more likely that the similarities represent drawing on a common pool of ideas.[10] Idiomatic language in Revelation is discussed in the commentary and the footnotes.

The third evidence of a Hebrew text is that sometimes taking the Greek literally results in a clumsy English translation or a sentence may even fail to make sense. However, the verse

makes perfect sense when translated back into Hebrew. For example, in 10:1 an angel is described with feet like pillars. However, feet cannot be “like pillars,” only legs can. The problem is resolved by recognizing that while Greek has separate words for “feet” and “legs” Hebrew has only one word that can mean both. Apparently, a Greek translator unacquainted with Hebrew nuances translated the Hebrew word as “feet” when the intention was “legs.”

The fourth evidence of a Hebrew text is the use of conjunctions. Joining individual words in a list within a sentence or one clause to another with the conjunction “and” is a frequent characteristic feature of the Hebrew Scriptures, whereas in Greek literature an independent clause will be subordinated to the main clause of the sentence and the use of conjunctions minimized.[11] The conjunction “and” in Hebrew functions generally as a prefix to Hebrew words without using a separate word. To make a Hebrew word part of a connecting sequence, the letter vav (v) is added to the noun as its first letter.[12] There are several conjunctions in the Greek language, but kai, meaning “and,” also” or “even” is by far the most common in the New Testament[13] and used in the LXX to translate the vav character. English normally uses a coordinating conjunction only between the last two elements in a series of three or more, so while the KJV faithfully renders kai modern Bible versions leave 80% of the instances of kai untranslated to avoid awkwardness. Yet, in the Greek New Testament there is an excessive use of kai,[14] an excellent proof of an original Hebrew text.

In addition to the Hebrew linguistic foundation of Revelation, the content of Revelation is decidedly Hebrew in three significant ways. First, as Stern points out, while there are few direct quotations, there are over 500 allusions to the Tanakh, principally from Exodus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah.[15] The overall effect of so many references is to anchor Revelation in the God-inspired words of Israel’s prophets. Of course, except for the prologue (1:1-8), John writes in a straightforward narrative of a personal experience and nowhere does he use the familiar “it is written” (or similar words) to refer to one of the Hebrew prophets as Jesus and the apostles do in the rest of the New Testament.[16] John declares that his narrative is a revelation directly from his Messiah. The similarities between Revelation and the Hebrew Prophets exist because both were inspired by the same source as “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:21) and both reflect God’s grace to warn His people and mankind that the Day of the Lord is coming.

Second, Revelation contains the same elements as the story of the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. Dan Juster has summarized the points of commonality between the two books as follows (1) preparation of God’s people, (2) the plagues of God on worldwide Egypt, (3) God’s people protected, (4) Anti-messiah, the last days Pharaoh, (5) the exodus rapture, (6) wrath of the Lamb and His armies and (7) entry into the promised Land.[17] Revelation could then be deemed the story of the last Exodus.

Third, Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889) identified many parallels between the narrative and prophetic symbols in Revelation and the architecture, traditions, customs, worship and administration practices associated with the Jerusalem Temple.

“But it is specially remarkable, that the Temple-references with which the Book of Revelation abounds are generally to minutiae, which a writer who had not been as familiar with such details, as only personal contact and engagement with them could have rendered him, would scarcely have even noticed, certainly not employed as part of his imagery. They come in naturally, spontaneously, and so unexpectedly, that the reader is occasionally in danger of overlooking them altogether; and in language such as a professional man would employ, which would come to him from the previous exercise of his calling. Indeed, some of the most striking of these references could not have been understood at all without the professional treatises of the Rabbis on the Temple and its services.”[18]

Specific allusions to the Temple may be found in the following Revelation passages: 1:13; 3:5, 12, 20; 4:8, 11; 5:8-9, 12-13; 6:9-10; 7:2-3, 9-12; 8:1-4; 9:4; 10:7, 11; 11:15; 13:8; 14:1-5; 15:24, 6; 16:15; 19:1, 3-4, 6-8; 21:3, 16, 19-20. Edersheim’s observation and explanation of these details are especially valuable to understanding the spiritual lessons of Revelation.

[1] Luke is generally considered to have been a Jewish proselyte. (David Stern, *Restoring the Jewishness of the Gospel*, 61).

[2] David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, ix.

[3] David Biven & Roy Blizzard, Jr., *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, 4.

[4] Aramaic words in the New Testament include *talitha cumi* (Mark 5:41), *Ephphata* (Mark 7:34), *rabboni* (John 20:16) and *abba* (Mark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Even the Hebrew writings of the Mishnah and the Dead Sea Scrolls contain Aramaic words (Biven, 9). [5] The influence of literary criticism is so strong that even though the Greek specifically says *Hebrais*, meaning “Hebrew,” in John 5:2; 19:17, 20; 20:16; Acts 21:40; 22:2 and 26:14, the NIV translators rendered the Greek word as “Aramaic” in all those seven occurrences. The CEV translates “Hebrais” in five out of these seven verses with “Aramaic.” The NLT also uses “Aramaic” three times. The NCV avoided making the choice between “Hebrew” and “Aramaic” by translating *Hebrais* as “Jewish language” in all of the seven verses. Ironically, the NIV translates *Hebrais* as “Hebrew” or “Hebraic” in Acts 6:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22; Philippians 3:5; Revelation 9:11 and 16:16.

[6] Biven & Blizzard, *op. cit.*, 17-21. Notable Hebrew scholars Moshe Bar-Asher, Harris Birkeland, Frank Cross, David Flusser, Jehoshua Grintz, Pinhas Lapide and Abbe J.T. Milik are cited to substantiate the thesis. While not acknowledged by Biven, David Stern has likewise made a significant contribution to understanding the Jewish roots of the New Testament with his many publications on similar themes.

[7] David Flusser, *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity* (1989), quoted in Stern, 91.

[8] In the ongoing debate over the best English translation the argument usually resorts to a discussion of the best Greek text and whether the TR, M-Text or the earliest MSS should be given greater weight, since the original autographs no longer exist. Scholars have not adequately considered the thesis that the apostles wrote most, if not all, the New Testament originally in Hebrew and then others translated the circulated works into Greek. The same linguistic evidences for Hebrew can be cited in the rest of the New Testament.

- [9] Biven & Blizzard, op. cit., 2.
- [10] Stern, op. cit., 31.
- [11] Biven & Blizzard, op. cit., 50.
- [12] John J. Parsons, "The Conjunctive Vav," Hebrew For Christians: 2005, [http://hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_Four/Conjunctive\\_Vav/conjunctive\\_vav.html](http://hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_Four/Conjunctive_Vav/conjunctive_vav.html). [13] Dana and Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, 249.
- [14] Kai is uncommonly frequent in the Gospels and Acts (in well over 3,200 verses) and in over 1,800 verses in the rest of the New Testament. In Revelation kai occurs in 369 out of 384 verses (sixth highest count of New Testament books), occurring in many verses three or more times. Olive Tree Bible Search Engine (<http://www.olivetree.com>).
- [15] Stern, op. cit., 785.
- [16] E.g. Matthew 2:5; 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; Mark 1:2; 7:6; John 6:45; Acts 1:20; 7:42; Romans 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:9; Galatians 3:10; Hebrews 10:7; 1 Peter 1:16.
- [17] Daniel Juster, Revelation: The Passover Key, Table of Contents.
- [18] Alfred Edersheim, The Temple-Its Ministry and Services, 105f.

More introductory commentary from: [www.answersintheendtimes.com](http://www.answersintheendtimes.com)

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ – A Hebraic Perspective

The goal of this series is to provide an understanding of the book of Revelation from primarily a Hebraic perspective, rather than just the Western perspective that is offered in most commentaries today. As Westerners and Gentiles, we often forget that this book was handed down from a Jewish Messiah to a Jewish disciple, with primarily a Jewish audience in mind. As a result, many Jewish cultural practices and traditions of that day were woven into the fabric of this document, and it's content cannot be properly understood unless it is examined from that perspective. So in this module, we'll do just that.

And one more thing; I'd be remiss if I didn't give a special thanks to John Klein, Adam Spear, and Michael Christopher, the authors of the "Lost in Translation" series that provided much of the inspiration for these sessions. While most of the information that will be presented over the next few months will be information that I've accumulated over the last 10 years of personal study of the Revelation, the underlying structural ideas were theirs.

## The Essence and Structure of the Revelation

In its essence, the Revelation describes the end of this age, and the judgments that will systematically fall on mankind for violating God's 'Ketubah'. While this particular word is probably not familiar to most Christians, the Ketubah was simply a Jewish wedding contract, and it's structure and content happens to be reflected throughout scripture. Most Christians understand the concept of the 'Wedding Supper of the Lamb', where we find Jesus Christ as the groom and the Church as the bride. But rarely have we heard of the Jewish wedding contract that provides the basis for this future marriage. So the first thing we need to do is examine the basic tenets of

the typical Ketubah, because one day soon this divine contract will determine who is at the Wedding Supper, and who is not.

In its structure, the Revelation is based on the 'Tree of Life', which is a master menorah that contains seven mini-menorahs, for a total of 49 separate events that take place throughout the book. Since the order of these events is dictated by the structure of this master menorah, the second thing we will have to do is examine the strict set of rules that these events must obey. As we progress through this series over the next several months, it's my hope that you will find yourself abandoning some of the pre-conceived notions that you may have held, and adopting some of the ideas that can only come from this Hebraic perspective. In truth, I hope you will never view this book in the same way again.

The Revelation and Ancient Hebrew Betrothal - In Western culture, the marriage process is typically preceded by an 'engagement', which is the promise of marriage at a later date. This concept springs from the 'betrothal' process that has been conducted in the east for thousands of years, although engagement and betrothal are not necessarily synonymous. Betrothal actually takes on many additional legal ramifications, and forms one basis for the entire New Testament. Then, the book of Revelation describes the culmination of that process in the future 'Wedding Supper of the Lamb'; Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Rev 19:9) Because of the importance of this process and how it relates to the message of the New Testament, and therefore the Revelation, it becomes essential to learn how the ancient Hebrew betrothal process unfolded. So let's jump in.

The Arrangement - As you may already know, most ancient marriages in the east were arranged by the parents of the bride and groom, and Hebrew culture was no different. A friendship between families was often the basis for such an arrangement, however sometimes the respective families were completely unknown to each other. Parents sometimes chose a prospective mate for their son or daughter based on financial or social advantage, however sometimes it had no bearing at all. In addition, these arrangements were sometimes made early in their life, and sometimes later. The arrangements were as varied as the people involved. But the one constant in the process was that the parents, particularly the father, had to approve of the prospective spouse before betrothal could take place.

The Leak....In ancient Israel, when the parents of a prospective groom determined that it was time for their son to marry, a prospective bride would be identified in one of the several ways noted above. Once this matter was settled, the next step would be to leak the news of a pending marriage proposal to family and friends. This news would quickly spread throughout the community, allowing the prospective bride and her family time to prepare accordingly. In other words, if the prospective bride was inclined to accept the prospective groom's proposal, her entire family would often be there to welcome him.



The Father Decides - When the groom's father decided the time was right to make the marriage proposal, the father and son would go to the prospective bride's house carrying three traditional items;

- 1) the 'betrothal cup'
- 2) some wine
- 3) the 'bride price'.

The wine would be quite necessary, since the bride and groom and their families would all share in several cups during this process, if all went well.

Knock, Knock....Once sufficient time had passed for the bride and her family to prepare for their coming, the prospective groom and his father would set out for her home. When they arrived, the prospective groom would stand at the door and knock. This in itself constituted a formal marriage proposal, as modeled by Jesus in Revelation 3:20; "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock....." It should be noted that opening the door alone did not denote a marriage, it was merely an agreement to pursue the terms of a prospective marriage. But the proper terms would first have to be negotiated before any legally binding contract could be made. It's an interesting commentary on Jewish culture that while this process was legally binding on the groom at this point, it was not legally binding on the bride. In fact, the bride could legally withdraw from the betrothal at any time throughout the entire process, including right up until the time of the actual marriage ceremony.

Opening the Door - When they heard the prospective groom's knock at the door, the bride's father would look at his daughter for a sign of her approval. If she agreed to this arrangement, he then opened the door and allowed the groom and his father inside. By opening the door, the bride was announcing her intent to marry the groom. But again, a proper legal arrangement would first have to be made. At this point, the marriage was far from a done deal.

CUP 1 – The Cup of Sanctification - As soon as they were invited inside, a 1st CUP of wine was consumed by the groom and his father, along with the bride and her entire family. This could be a rather large group, since her entire extended family was generally in attendance, having been warned ahead of time. This first cup was called the "Cup of Sanctification". The Old Testament equivalent was known as a 'blood covenant', which we will refer to in later lessons, and it was a literal covenant that each family was making to serve the other. This was no small promise, since servanthood demanded responsibilities from each party involved, and there were legal remedies if the various parties did not perform these duties.

CUP 2 – The Cup of Dedication - At this point, both parties would sit down for a meal in the bride's home. But before the meal could be served, the 2nd CUP of the betrothal was consumed, this time by just the two fathers, along with the bride and groom. This was known as the "Cup of Dedication", but was also known as the "Cup of Betrothal" or the "Cup of Plagues", which was an interesting implied warning for those that would dare break the covenant. This cup initiated the

meal that would follow, which in Old Testament terms represented the “salt covenant” that declared eternal friendship. This covenant was historically sealed by the dipping of bread into a bowl of salt that had been combined from the personal salt pouches of the respective parties. In an interesting bit of symbolism, once this ritual was completed, each party would pour half of the salt back in their personal salt pouches. But at this point, some of the salt now in their bag would have come from the other parties bag, and vice versa. It would be impossible to separate them again, and they would remain intertwined with the grains from the other pouch for as long as that salt lasted. In the same way, this act symbolized an irrevocable relationship between parties that could not be undone.

Let the Negotiations Begin! Once the 2nd Cup had been consumed, the meal would be served as the betrothal negotiations between the parties began in earnest. These negotiations were often quite intense and were conducted as a business proposition during this meal. This was an important cultural tradition, and was recognized by Jesus in the same verse,

Revelation 3:20, that was noted earlier; “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” By this statement, Jesus was alluding to the meal and corresponding negotiations that always took place at this time. These specific items could include almost anything, but they were generally limited to highly practical issues such as how the groom would support his bride and provide for her, or what kind of housing he would arrange. For his family, it would generally revolve around how much they would contribute to the wedding feast, or how his family would help care for the bride and her subsequent family. For the bride, negotiations generally would address what possessions she would bring to the marriage, what skills she had in the home, and what she would need to do to become a ‘Proverbs Wife’ (see Proverbs 31). But again, these negotiations could include just about anything that each party would agree to.

If you’ve ever been involved in any intense negotiations, you know that they can easily fall apart, and sometimes these betrothal dinners did not end well. I sometimes wonder what the batting percentage would be in those ancient cultures, where haggling often led to heated disagreements. I imagine this was particularly true during periods where resources were not easy to come by. So if the betrothal was going to fail, it was going to happen here. And since this betrothal process mirrors the salvation process, then perhaps this is what Paul had in mind with the following; “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling....” (Phil 2:12) When mentioning the “fear and trembling” of our salvation, I can’t help but equate this salvation to our status as bride, and therefore the ‘fear and trembling’ could actually be a reference to the negotiations with God that takes place in our hearts every day. If that is true, then we should indeed ‘fear and tremble’ if we haven’t yet accepted the terms of His proposal.

CUP 3 – The “Cup of Inheritance”. Assuming that the negotiations were ultimately successful, the bride and groom alone would consume the 3rd CUP, known as the “Cup of Inheritance”. It

was alternately known as the “Cup of Redemption”, however it essentially served as the ‘inheritance covenant’ between the parties. This Cup signified that the bride now had a shared inheritance with the groom. At this point, if either of the betrothed parties died before the wedding took place, they would still inherit from the other’s estate. Hopefully another antennae is going up in your mind when you read this, because in our betrothal with Jesus Christ, well.....we have to note that He did in fact die before His wedding took place. So, is this simple Jewish tradition worthy of note for us as Christians? Most definitely so, because our inheritance in Jesus’ kingdom is still legally binding as His ‘betrothed’.

Sandals - The concept of inheritance has an interesting symbol in the Old Testament that applies to the betrothal process. If you’ve spent any time reading the Old Testament stories, you may recall several instances where sandals were taken off and given to others when land deals were made, or when people inherited or redeemed property. This has a fascinating application in the wedding ceremony that we will cover in a later lesson, but for now, just know that sandals were always used to symbolize inheritance in ancient cultures. This concept is what Jesus was presenting to the disciples in the upper room before the Last Supper. Jesus was taking off their sandals and washing their feet, signifying their inheritance in His Kingdom. But this was not understood by the disciples, and Peter initially balked at the idea; “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”.....But Jesus knew that unless Peter took part in this ceremony, he could not inherit in His kingdom. So Jesus made it quite plain to him with His reply as recorded in John 13:8; Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” Jesus was essentially entering into the ‘inheritance covenant’ with Peter and the disciples, which Peter was unknowingly rejecting. But this concept will become clearer when we address the wedding ceremony in a later lesson.

The ‘Ketubah’ - Okay, back to the betrothal. Once the 3rd CUP had been consumed and this was finally considered a ‘done deal’, the fathers would call for a Scribe. This was often a Priest, and the Scribe/Priest would record all of the details and terms of the agreement that they had reached during negotiations. The resulting wedding contract was known as a ‘Ketubah’, and it’s content will be the subject of next week’s lesson.

The In-Laws - Once the Ketubah was signed, the bride and groom were now legally bound, and all that remained was for each to fulfill the requirements of their contract. The groom’s parents now legally had a ‘daughter-in-law’, the bride’s parents had a ‘son-in-law’, and the two sets of parents were ‘in-laws’. This legal arrangement was illustrated in the account of Lot in Genesis 19:14; “So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters.” Although Lots daughters were not yet formally married, Lot had two sons-in-law because they were formally betrothed. This concept stands in stark contrast to our western culture, where this legal arrangement does not actually occur until the wedding day. But keep in mind that throughout this entire process, the bride could still withdraw at any time, even though the groom was still legally bound to continue.

Hitting the Streets! Once the legal agreement had been made, the young men of each family would traditionally hit the streets for a celebration, blowing shofars and announcing the joyous occasion, which was generally acknowledged and shared by the community.

The Wine Abstention - Once he was betrothed, it was customary for the groom not to drink any wine again until the actual marriage ceremony and subsequent wedding supper. At the Last Supper, Jesus seems to allude to this in the following statement in Luke 22:18; "For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Going to Prepare a Place - Once all of these things were accomplished, the groom would then make a promise to his betrothed wife to go and prepare a place for her to live, which was often an addition to his father's home. In eastern cultures it was traditional to keep extended family units together, and you rarely had a break-up of the family unit. So here is yet another instance where Jesus observed the cultural mandates of the times; "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (Jn 14:2-3)

The 4th CUP - There is one more cup of wine that was consumed in this process, however it was not consumed until the actual wedding ceremony took place. So we'll reserve this discussion for a later lesson, but this was called the "Cup of Praise", and it was consumed only by the bride and the groom. A few additional details about this cup will be added when we discuss the actual ceremony.

IN SUMMATION - In summation, each of the cups that were consumed in this process had to be consumed in their proper order. None of them could be skipped, and all three had to be consumed before the 4th and final cup could be consumed at the wedding ceremony. This is a good point to keep in mind as we proceed over the next few weeks and months, because it will resurface time and again in the study of the Revelation. For review purposes, this week we covered the following;

#### The Cups

- 1) Cup of Sanctification (Blood Covenant)
- 2) Cup of Dedication (Salt Covenant)
- 3) Cup of Inheritance (Sandal Covenant)
- 4) Cup of Praise – saved for the wedding ceremony

The Covenants - In the Jewish betrothal process, the covenants occur in this order;

- 1) Servant (Blood Covenant)
- 2) Friendship (Salt Covenant)

3) Inheritance (Sandal Covenant)

Marriage - But in the Upper Room, Jesus actually reversed this order;

3) Inheritance (Sandal Covenant) – WASHED THEIR FEET FIRST

2) Friendship (Salt Covenant) – BROKE BREAD NEXT

1) Servant (Blood Covenant) – SPILLED HIS BLOOD ON CROSS LAST

Perhaps this is a good time to examine where we are, personally, in the covenant-making process with Jesus. Have we consumed each of the first three cups yet to qualify as His bride? Or perhaps just one? Maybe two? Maybe this is what Jesus had in mind in Matthew 22:14 when he said; “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”