



The Beauty of Betrothal

As I have researched betrothal over the past weeks I have found it to be rich with the love and poetic beauty of God. My hope in this article is to paint the vivid picture that betrothal is of your covenant relationship with Yeshua (Jesus). If this painting of betrothal is a sunrise on the sea, then God's love is the sun, the sea is the living reflection and the sky is filled with awesome strokes of God's covenant faithfulness through history. Let's begin with God's love.

What my Dad told me growing up is especially true of betrothal; God loves object lessons. He loves them because they speak directly to our hearts. Like marriage, betrothal is an object lesson or parable reflecting our covenant with God. Betrothal unlike engagement is an actual covenant that is made prior to the wedding day. This is what God has done with us! He has made a covenant with us by the blood of Yeshua and the wedding is yet to come. Revelation 19:7 tells us of the coming wedding; "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready". Yeshua loves us as a man loves his bride! When we embrace His love in this way it becomes real and pulsing with life.

A betrothal is much further reaching than the confines of a culture; it is something that God Himself participates in. God says in Hosea 2:19-20, "I will betroth you to me forever, yes I will betroth you to me in righteousness and justice, in loving-kindness and mercy I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know Yahweh". In verse 16 of this same chapter God says "You will call me my husband and will call me no more my master." Do you hear the heartbeat of God? He wants to be an intimate husband to His people.

The climax of a betrothal ceremony is when the groom signifies his vows by drinking from a cup of wine then hands the cup to the bride. If she drinks, the covenant is sealed. Without understanding this concept that was familiar to the people of Yeshua's day, the significance of the cup Yeshua shared with His disciples is missed in part. Matthew 26: "Then He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink from it all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom". That night when the disciples drank the cup they in essence were agreeing to the covenant that Yeshua proposed to them. Since that night Yeshua has not had a drink of the fruit of the vine. He is waiting for the wedding! Yeshua is intense!

When you committed your life to Yeshua, you entered into a covenant with Him, you were betrothed. At the set time, when the Father says "Go", Yeshua will come for His bride and the

marriage will be complete. When we take on the magnitude of this that we are preparing for a wedding feast, we no longer view holiness as a cranky lifestyle but rather as pure white linen on a beautiful bride.

Let's now look at what a betrothal ceremony is like, or the living reflection of the sea in the painting. Just as the reflection varies from wave to wave, so there are many ways to do betrothal. I say this not because I have a lot of experience with betrothal ceremonies, but just to say that there is no set in stone way of doing it. Tali and I had fun coming up with ideas and borrowing ideas from others about how to do our betrothal. Honestly, I have only been to one betrothal ceremony, but I can tell you this, it was life changing! I went to it a single man and left a married man! Like at a typical wedding Tali and I made vows and exchanged rings. We both understood that this was for life. To emphasize this we were legally married also.

Here is a definition of betrothal the best I understand it: A covenant between a man and a woman that is as binding as marriage. A betrothed couple are husband and wife in every way except in physical union. This union begins on the wedding day.

Now let's turn our attention to the covenant faithfulness of God through history, or the majestic sky in the painting. As the clouds are made amazingly beautiful when the sun shines through them, so the pages of the Bible come alive with beauty when they are illuminated with God's love. Jeremiah 2:2 "Thus says Yahweh I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal when you went after me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown." From the context of this verse we see that the people God is speaking to about the love of their betrothal are the Israelites in the wilderness. It was there that God made a covenant with Israel, far away from the slavery and distractions of Egypt. Sometimes God does the same with us, He strips away what is familiar to us, showing us our great need for Him, in particular our need for covenant with Him.

Joseph and Mary's betrothal story is found in Matthew 1:18-19. Now the birth of Yeshua Messiah was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband being a just man and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly". We see here that Joseph and Mary had not yet come together so the only way Mary could be with child in Joseph's mind was through unfaithfulness. When it says Joseph was minded to put her away, it is saying in today's language that he was going to divorce her. Joseph had grounds to do this based on his perception that Mary had been unfaithful to Him. A dream came to the rescue as we know and God had His incredible will carried out in Joseph and Mary's relationship. What is important to know in this story as it relates to betrothal, is that Joseph and Mary were in covenant by being betrothed.

To close I would like to share two general responses I have gotten about this way of marriage. 1. Interest because it is different. 2. Offense because it is different. Whichever of the two you are I desire that this article causes you to press in to the heart of Yeshua and that you would know Him as your covenant keeping King.

Shalom,

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