# Jesus The Worthy Bridegroom Dr Jason Hubbard

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I believe one of the great storylines of the Scriptures is this: The Father giving his Son a bride. She would be an eternal companion, an equally yoked partner in love, who would be at his side to reign and rule with him forever!

The Bible starts with a wedding and ends with a wedding!

Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV), “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

At the beginning God created them male and female, as a living picture of the covenantal relationship that he desired to have with the human race. Just as a man is called to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, Jesus left his Father in heaven and took on human flesh to be forever joined to his bride, the church! As the Father put the first Adam to sleep and brought forth a woman out of his side, so Jesus was put to death. Out of the side wound of the Lamb, the second Adam, a bride was brought forth, united with him in his death and resurrection.

The marriage would be fully consummated at the end of the age, the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Revelation 19:6-7, “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

In John 17:24-25, just hours before the cross, Jesus lifts his eyes to his Father in prayer and declares his most holy intentions.

“Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am to see my Glory that you have given me!” ( John 17:24 ).

What do you give a Son that has everything? Jesus strikes at the heart of our greatest longing to know that we are desired and loved by God. Jesus was telling the Father that He desires us to be near Him, not at a distance, but close like a bridegroom and a bride. Our relationship with Jesus goes beyond contractual agreement and faithful obedience. It is to be typified by fervent, ardent love and longing like a bridegroom and a bride have for one another. We are the object of his affections. He longs for a bridal partner not a mere subject in His kingdom. The covenant from heaven’s perspective between God and man is not defined as a service agreement but as a marriage covenant.

We love a king who will not sell out his people for wealth and power but who will humbly serve his people even unto death. We love a husband who fights for the heart, honor, and nobility of his bride, even to the point of death.

Many times, we push him away, but the statement from Jesus on the cross is, “You’re the one I desire.”

In Jesus we have an unwavering King and companion who will give up His life for love. We are the one creature made in the image of God for God, created to be an eternal companion and co-heir with Christ forever. Even now, Jesus maintains a resurrected human body forever. He has forever joined himself to us in love!   
 The Father and Son are in agreement. The Father wants to give his Son a bride and the Son desires to have a bride, an eternal companion and voluntary lover! She would be in full partnership with his leadership, adorned with His beauty, and seated with him in heavenly places!

I think it is fascinating that Jesus’ first recorded miracle was at a wedding feast in Cana, John 2, where Jesus turns water into wine. In this story something embarrassing has happened, they have run out of wine. It is the responsibility of the bridegroom to provide the wine for the wedding feast. Mary the mother of Jesus says to Jesus, ‘they have no wine, and Jesus says, ‘what does that have to do with us, my hour has not yet come?’ Why does he say that? He is referencing the fast that He as ‘The Bridegroom’ is responsible for providing the wine for the ultimate wedding feast, which is yet to come. He says, ‘My hour is not yet come.’ He is speaking of the hour when his

blood will be poured out in order to establish the new covenant. Nonetheless, He provides the wine, filling up 6 water jars changing the water to wine. He saved the best wine for last! These 6 water pots were for ritual cleansing, and they are now filled with a super abundance of wine, approx. 120-180 gallons! This a prophetic picture that the way forward in cleansing in order to enter into covenant, is through wine, through the wine of the blood of Jesus.

Jesus specifically said, when he handed them the wine at the last supper, a rehearsal of the covenant meal, ‘this is the new covenant in my blood.’ The most valuable currency in the universe is the blood of Jesus that was shed for us to enter into a covenant relationship with God the Father.

On the night before the cross, Jesus had gathered his disciples in the Upper Room. Jesus had been preparing his disciples for his coming death. He now speaks to them a tender word of promise and encouragement,

John 14:1-3, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 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.”

I believe the last supper is a cultural picture of a betrothal ceremony. Betrothal is the first step in marriage, the beginning of covenant. Jesus was drawing from Jewish marriage customs. The Jewish understanding of betrothal has always been much stronger than our modern day understanding of engagement. The betrothal was a binding agreement that would literally need a certificate of divorce to annul the contract (Deut. 24:1-4). The Hebrew word for betrothal, eyrusin , means sanctification, or the setting apart of an individual. It clearly defines the purpose of this period as a time in which a couple would consecrate themselves to prepare to enter into the covenant of marriage.

Let’s look at a few of these Jewish customs to understand the context of several Scriptures related to this betrothal ceremony!

1. J e wish marriages were typically arranged. The Father would choose a bride for his Son.

Ephesians 1:4 (NIV), “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

2. T h e Father and son would leave their home and travel to the girl’s home for the purpose of obtaining a wife through marriage covenant called a ‘ katubah .’

Genesis 2:24 (NIV), “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

3. T h e Bridal price was established. They would meet with the Father of the chosen bride and negotiate the bridal price called the ‘ mohar .’ The price was always a reflection of the value that the man had placed on his soon to be bride.

Deuteronomy 7:6 (NKJV), “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

4. T h e Betrothal date was se The Father and son would leave and the son returns to his home to sell whatever needs to be sold for the bride’s price ( mohar )

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV), “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV), “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

5. T h e Betrothal date arrived. The young man and his parents arrived at the girl’s house for the betrothal dinner. This was usually done publicly-under the canopy ( Huppah ) where they declared their hearts to become betrothed to one another! And always a Cup was placed before them, but no one could touch it until the appointed time.

Luke 22:14-15 (NIV), “When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”

6. T h e Marriage covenant was presented and offered! Jesus presented the covenant in the upper room

Matthew 26:26-28 (NIV), “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

7. T h e Marriage covenant is called the K atubah and states the bridal price, the promise to support and care for her, and the terms of the marriage should she accep It is a legal document and could only be broken by a divorce.

Ephesians 5:28-32 (NIV), “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body.”

Romans 8:32 (NIV), “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV), “God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

8. T h e Father asked the bride if she would accept and then the Father offered the cup to his son, the groom. The young man drank signifying his willingness to sacrifice in order to make her his wife!

Matthew 26:39 (NIV), “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

9. T h e groom then offered the cup to his bride signifying her willingness to enter into the marriage saying, “I accept the gift of your life and I offer you my life in return.”

Matthew 26:27-28 (NIV), “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

10. Once they drank, the young man handed over the bride price to the bride’s father.

Luke 23:46 (NIV), “Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.”

11. T h e young man then presented his gifts to his bride called the Matan , which means gift or pledge. This word is translated into Greek as ‘ Charismata .’ This gift was considered a pledge of his love, and a deposit and promise of his return!

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV), “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

12. As she accepted these gifts of value, the betrothal was now complete and she entered into a time of sanctification, called the ‘ kiddushin .’ She was now not only set apart (betrothed), but also entering into a time of ‘sanctification’ being made ready for the return of her tender bridegroom!

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NIV), “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV), “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Hebrews 10:10 (NIV), “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

13. At this point the bride promised to pay a dowry. We pay our dowry as a yielded life set apart, holy, pure and belonging to another!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV), “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Romans 12:1 (NIV), “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Romans 6:12-13 (NIV), “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”

14. After the promise of the dowry, towards the end of the evening of the betrothal ceremony the young man makes plans to leave. The groom would make a speech and say, “I go to prepare a place for you. I will come back when it is ready.” Before he leaves, the young lady would then drink the remaining wine in the cup, called the drink of remembrance, she remembers that she is betrothed, she is in covenant and that she also remembers that her bridegroom has to leave but at a certain point he will come back and they will be united together and the wedding will take place. This word remembrance is a very specific one, when Jesus says, ‘as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do it in ‘remembrance’ of me. He is using betrothal language that the disciples would have understand!

15. T h e Groom returned to his father’s hous When the young man arrived at the Father’s house, the Father would send either a close relative or trusted servant, back to the place of bride to teach and instruct the bride in everything concerning the groom. The groom would then begin building their future house. The Father was the judge of when it was finished and when the young man could claim his bride—the son didn’t know when that day would come.

John 14:26 (ESV), “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Matthew 24:36 (NIV), “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

16. As she is waited for his return, she was referred to as the one, “bought with a price.” She would typically wear a veil signifying that she was now SET APART, SANCTIFIED, and belonged to another! She took on his name and was considered his wife with all the rights and privileges.

John 14:2-3 (NIV), “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.”

Romans 8:17 (NIV), “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

17. During this season the bride prepared her wedding dress (garment) and consecrated herself. This was a time of preparation for the return of her bridegroom! She was to have an oil lamp always lit and extra oil on hand! As the time grew near she would gather her bridesmaids, and they would sleep in her room, and the bride would often sleep in her wedding gown!

Revelation 19:7-8 (NIV), “For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”

Isaiah 61:10 (NIV), “I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

Matthew 25:1–13 (ESV), “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ 12 But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

18. W h e n all was ready, the Father would give the command to go. Jewish brides were often stolen at nigh The bride was always to be ‘watching and ready’ for his return! When close, the groom’s friend (the friend of the bridegroom) would run ahead and stand under the window and say,

‘B e ho l d , the Bridegroom! The Bridegroom is coming! Blessed is he who comes!’

Matthew 25:1-6 (NIV), “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NIV), “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”

Matthew 23:39 (NIV), “For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

19. T h e Trumpet ( shofar ) was then blown and the bridegroom would charge in and take away his bride to his Father’s house to celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!

1 Corinthians 15:52 (NIV), “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Matthew 25:10 (NIV), “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.”

What an amazing story and to think it’s true!

Isaiah connected the revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom with the end-time prayer movement that will continue night and day until the Lord returns to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth:

"You shall be called Hephzibah ... the Lord delights in you ... For ... as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I have set watchmen [intercessors] on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night ... till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Is. 62:4-7, NKJV).

He prophesied that in the end times God's people would be called "Hephzibah," which in Hebrew carries the meaning of the Lord's delighting in His people.

The God who delights in us is the very One who will set intercessors in place to worship and pray 24/7 until Jesus returns (Is. 62:6-7). His Holy Spirit is moving right now to raise up a multitude of men and women—singers, preachers, evangelists, writers, marketplace leaders, intercessors and so on—all over the world, who will proclaim that God delights in His people.

People are best motivated to sustain night-and-day prayer and intercession when they understand that God delights in them as a bridegroom delights in his bride.In fact, one reason people burn out in intercession and ministry to others is that they lack the intimacy with God that comes from encountering Jesus as their Bridegroom God who delights in His relationship with them. In other words, the revelation of the Church as Jesus' cherished Bride is essential to keeping our hearts alive through the years as we diligently do the work of the kingdom.

Forever married to the Lamb,

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