**THE CROWN OF ESPOUSAL**

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

-Song of Solomon 3:11

King Solomon in this Scripture is a type of Christ. A type is a shadow of something to come. The Song of Solomon illustrates the relationship of Christ the Bridegroom with His bride.

I. THE CROWN SIGNIFIES THAT THERE HAS BEEN A CONTRACT OF ENGAGEMENT.

A. This crown of espousal was a nuptial crown that represented a marriage agreement had taken place.

1. The King was revealing his intent of marriage to his chosen bride.

2. The crown was like a laurel which contained green leaves.

3 The leaves represent a promise of life. – Jn. 1:4.

B. Jesus bore a crown of thorns upon the cross.

1. The whole world crowned Him.

Rom. 3:23, I Jn. 2:2.

2. The thorns represent the suffering caused by the curse of sin. – Genesis 3:17-19.

a. Thorns are a part of the curse of sin.

b. Jesus came to break the curse of sin.

*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: -* Galatians 3:13

C. This espousal is a binding contract.

1. It could only be broken by the bridegroom due to unfaithfulness of his espoused bride.

2. Jesus is the mediator of a New Covenant.

*And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*.

-Hebrews 12:24

a. A Covenant is a contract or agreement.

b. The Word of God is a written agreement.

c. Jesus will keep His part of the contract.

3. The espoused bride must keep the contract.

a. Only those who are faithful to the written agreement of God’s Word can stay espoused to Jesus the Bridegroom.

b. Disobedience to the Word will void the espousal agreement.

II. THE BETROTHAL OF THE BRIDE AND THE BRIDEGROOM.

A. The betrothal was a formal agreement between the couple intending to be married.

1. A mutual agreement to be married at an appointed time.

a. This was a serious commitment that required total separation from all others.

b. A betrothal was undertaken by a friend or agent representing the bridegroom and by the parents of the bride.

This concept is portrayed in the following Scriptures:

*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.* - John 3:29

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*- Matthew 1:18

2. Both were required to maintain total purity during this time of engagement.

a. Jesus is Holy.

b. **The bride must be wholly like Him. - HOLY!**

3. The invitation has been given to be espoused to The Bridegroom.

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* - II Corinthians 11:2

a. The Laodicean Church will not respond to the invitation. – Rev. 3: 14-21.

b. There are conditions to be met in order to be accepted by the Bridegroom.

B. The Bridegrooms role in the betrothal.

1. The Bridegroom chooses his bride.

a. He will only choose a bride that he approves of.

b. He is looking for moral purity.

2. The Bridegroom must pay the price of the dowry for the Bride.

a. Jesus paid the price for our salvation.

*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* – I Corinthians 6:20

We have been redeemed with the blood of Jesus. - I Peter 1:18 –19

b. The price has been paid in full.

3. The Bridegroom brought a wineskin with him filled with wine.

C. The Brides role in the betrothal.

1. The bride would drink the wine as a sign of acceptance of the proposal.

a. The wine is a symbol of the Holy Ghost.

b. The prospective bride will need the infilling of the Holy Ghost in order to meet the requirements of acceptance.

2. The bride would commit herself to her future husband.

3. The bride would make necessary preparations for the wedding. – Rev. 19:7.