

place for His bride as she prepares herself for His return (**John 14:1-2, I John 3:2-3, Matthew 25:1-12**).

## SECOND, THE WEDDING:

The bridegroom comes with a procession to receive His bride unto Himself and escort her home (**I Thessalonians 4:13-18**).

## THIRD, THE MARRIAGE FEAST:

The celebration and consummation of the marriage is seen in **Revelation 19:7-9**, *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”*

## CONCLUSION

According to **Ephesians 5:31-32**, the husband and wife relationship is a picture of Christ and His church, *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* The church is at present espoused to Christ awaiting the time of marriage (**II Corinthians 11:2**). Jesus Christ is coming again, are you ready to meet Him? The Father hath made a marriage for His Son and the invitations are sent out (**Matthew 22:1-14**).

May we understand earthly relations on the subject of betrothal and also our Heavenly relationship with the Father, and Son, as the bride of Christ, Amen.

*“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**

# The RICHIES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed  
March 2006

## Betrothal

*“And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.”*

**Deuteronomy 20:7**

### + Biblical Pattern for Marriage +

Betrothal is a biblical term meaning espousal or engagement. Even though the word betrothal is hardly used in today's world, it is a doctrine of the Bible. The word betroth is used thirteen times in eight verses in the King James Bible (**Exodus 21:7-11; 22:16-17; Leviticus 19:20; Deuteronomy 20:7; 22:23-29; Hosea 2:19-20**). Betrothing, simply put, is a commitment that is binding between a young man and a young woman before marriage. It is a secure public relationship between the bride and groom to be, that is approved and blessed by their parents. Betrothal is not only a truth pertaining to marriage, but is a beautiful picture of salvation.

*“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.”*

**Hosea 2:19-20**



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**“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”**  
**Acts 16:31**

The purpose of this article is to consider a forgotten biblical truth about marriage in our modern society. Please consider the scriptures given and the comments made very prayerfully, for these truths may be the salvation of our families.

## THE MEANING OF BETROTHAL

Betrothal was an act of espousal or engagement for the purpose of marriage and appears to have been as binding as marriage itself (**Genesis 19:14, Exodus 22:16-17, Deuteronomy 22:23-29, Hosea 2:19-20, Matthew 1:18**). The word betroth occurs thirteen times in the Old Testament and the word espouse occurs once in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament. The Hebrew word aras that is translated betroth nine times in the Old Testament is also translated espouse in

**II Samuel 3:14.** Betrothal is a solemn promise of marriage, and it actually became a part of the marriage tradition, even though it was not marriage itself. According to **Deuteronomy 20:7**, a betrothed man was exempted from military service in order to take his wife and live with her, *“And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.”* Please note that he had betrothed a wife but had not actually taken her in marriage. The commitment of betrothal was made long before they began living together as husband and wife. The word troth means the trust of marriage and the prefix be denotes nearness or closeness, meaning to cause to come to pass.

The betrothed man was at times called a husband and the woman was called a wife even though they were not yet living together in marriage (**Deuteronomy 22:23-24**). According to **Deuteronomy 22:23-24**, sexual immorality with a betrothed girl was considered adultery (a sin committed within the boundary of marriage). She is treated as a married woman and put to death. If a man rapes a girl that is betrothed the penalty is the same as taking another man’s wife (**Deuteronomy 22:25-27**) and if she is not betrothed there is a shotgun wedding (**Deuteronomy 22:28-29**). God promised to betroth his divorced wife (Israel) again and restore her (**Hosea 2:19-20**). It was between betrothal and wedding that Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost. This explains why Joseph was going to put her away (divorce). In **Matthew 1:18**, the Bible says that they were espoused to each other, *“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.”* They were not married but the commitment to each other was very binding.

## THE PURPOSE OF BETROTHAL

Betrothal secures a future marriage between two young people with the blessings of God and both sets of parents. It guards against fornication (dating-game) and avoids the pitfalls of the world (divorce, unwanted pregnancies, etc.). As marriage is a covenant witnessed and ordained by God (**Malachi 2:14, Proverbs 2:16-17, Matthew 19:6**) and binding in every respect, betrothal is a binding commitment before marriage. Betrothal probably began with a formal ceremony that was held between both families of the groom and the bride. It would have been here that the dowry (bride’s price) would have been given which demonstrates the willingness and ability of the young man to be able to care for his future wife (**Genesis 9:18-21, Genesis 34:12, Exodus 27:16**). He may have given a ring or something else of value during this special occasion. Between the betrothal and wedding the young man would prepare a home while the young lady prepared wedding garments. Most betrothals were probably no more than a year or so. Betrothal should not be considered or entered into unless marriage is certain. The young man needs to mature and be responsible with a clear calling from his Savior. If he does not know where he is going in life how can he lead a wife. A young woman needs to be submissive and ready to follow for she is called a helpmeet in Scripture (**Hebrews 2:18-25**).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BETROTHAL

Betrothal is the Biblical pattern of salvation. The entire story itself is built upon this heavenly pattern. Marriage is a spiritual picture of Christ and His church. Jesus Christ is the perfect example of betrothal. God has not left us without a pattern to flounder around in darkness concerning His will in our lives.

From my understanding, the Jewish marriage consisted of three major parts: the betrothal, the wedding, and the marriage feast. Each part is very important in understanding God’s eternal redemption for mankind.

## FIRST, BETROTHAL:

The Heavenly Father sent the Son into the world to seek and find a bride. The bridegroom goes from his father’s house to get a bride. The Son paid the ultimate price (dowry) for His bride on Calvary’s cross according to **I Peter 1:18-19**, *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”* The bridegroom went back to His Father’s house to prepare a