

2.7.Cb(11).Bridegroom: Mashiach center of Kingdom's Celebration. Mark 2:18-22.

Read Mark 2:18-22.

¹⁹ And Jesus said to them, "Can the **wedding guests** fast while **the bridegroom** is with them? As long as they have **the bridegroom** with them, they cannot fast. 2:19

Background:

When the human family was once simply three main families, the three sons of Noah and their wives, we all shared in the knowledge of the true God, *Elohim*. But, at the tower of Babel, the Lord God judged humanity and sent its families to

populate the entire earth. The family of the eldest brother, Shem, occupied the lands of our origin, settling in the Middle East. Shem was destined to be the one brother to be a spiritual dwelling by which the other families would return home, so he retained the knowledge of the true God, Elohim. The other families of Ham and Japheth spread through the whole earth. Having lost their original language, they soon forgot God as Elohim, and their quickly fading memories of God became splintered, in each family, into its own religious tradition. This family memory and character, what we now call “culture,” shaped this distant memory of the true God, so that religious traditions focused on what each of the families valued. And, these religions and their cultural focuses multiplied and became as varied as the number of tribes and cultures covering the earth.

But, before this great “forgetting,” all the families heard God-Elohim’s promise of a

promised Son, a chosen “Seed-Zera” who would bring us all back home to God one day (Genesis 3:15). And, this promise lay dormant in each family memory, in many ways getting grafted and retold in the language of that family’s tradition and religion. But, like a long dormant thought ready to be remembered, the hope of Mashiach is older than each of the world’s religions, buried in the memory of what it means for us to be human.

There is a often-repeated but half complete saying, that “All religions lead to God.” This is false, because Jesus Mashiach is the only Redeemer of our family, being the only Son of God and the Son of Man to bear sins, and he stated clearly: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6). While all religions do not lead to God, we might correct this to boldly say: “All religions lead to Jesus Mashiach, and Jesus is the only way to God.”

One day soon, the Christian Church will be taken by Jesus Mashiach so that the age of denominations will come to an end. Then, all that will remain is Israel and the nations. On that day, Jesus Mashiach will belong to all the families of the Earth. The families of the earth will realize that their traditions and religions set them on a path that ends with Jesus Mashiach in the coming and earth-spanning Kingdom of God, but they must choose to complete this journey of faith. Understanding that their early steps do not dictate or define the Kingdom, they just merely prepare them for the journey forward. The worship and devotion to Allah does not mean that Elohim is Allah. On the contrary, as we have already considered, Allah is a mere foreshadowing, an incomplete shadow that should drive the worshipper to understand and know the fullness of the true God-*Elohim*, of which Allah, or Zoraster, or Zeus, or Vishnu are distorted and

misremembered ideas which should point to the true God in his glory and Lordship.

In this way, as you read this clash of the adherents of religion with the disciples of the Kingdom, you will see the clear difference separating them is one of focus. Religion focuses its adherents on what is most culturally relevant, whether it is “Law” or outward religious observance as we see here. But, the Kingdom is unlike every religion; it is the original reality which first defined life with God for us and is soon to overtake the entire world, covering it in the rule and shabbat and shalom of Jesus Mashaich himself. And, the Kingdom’s reality and focus, its sun-source and center, is always the Mashiach, the Heir of Heaven as the Son of God and the Heir of Earth as the Son of Man/David. He is the glorious center of the Kingdom and its source of celebration. So, Jesus Mashiach as creation’s Heir, is the center of its

unending, joyful celebration. Listen to this explanation of Mashiach's preeminence:

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the **kingdom of his beloved Son**, ¹⁴ in whom we have **redemption**, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of all creation**. ¹⁶ For by^[f] him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created **through him** and **for him**. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**,

that in everything he might be preeminent.¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:13-20.

The Lord God, naming Jesus Mashiach as His Heir, is pleased to give all creation as his inheritance so that “all things” are made “through him” and “for him.” And, not only to inherit what exists now, the current creation, but the Kingdom to come, the new age which is characterized not by this age’s *bondage to death*, but the next age’s *freedom from death*—for the founder of the next Age of the Kingdom is the One, the only one, who has died and has *risen from the Dead*. It is this Mashiach, risen from the Dead, who will inherit all

of the coming Age of the Kingdom, the Age of Resurrection, as well. And, to think of this Age when the past and the future are *wedded*, and all God's people are no longer alienated but brought home, and when Jesus Mashiach, as the Heir of heaven and earth, finally receives to Himself his people as He takes for himself his own House among the many houses of his brethren, even receiving territory in Israel. This culmination of the ages is depicted as the "Wedding Feast" of the Kingdom!

Focus:

1. Celebrating Mashiach as Heir of Kingdom. 2:18-19.
2. Center of Kingdom Joy: Jesus Mashiach).2:20
3. Containing New Life: Sacrifice old life). 2:21-22

Consider:

² “The **kingdom of heaven** may be compared to a **king** who gave a **wedding feast for his son**, ³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Matthew 22:2-3

As a newly born disciple of the Kingdom of God, it is important that you not view the Kingdom as if it were just another human religion. Though the stories of religions may involve great and unseen forces, their practices are invariably rooted in base human experiences and agendas. So, in this encounter when Jesus was asked why his disciples did not *act* in recognizably *religious ways*, he answers that the Kingdom is a *realm* rather than a *religion*.

And, at the center of this realm, is the unlikely and unfathomable interaction of God- *Elohim*. As

the first chapter of Genesis shows us, God exists as Elohim, a family unity of Father, Son, and Spirit. Or, as the story of Genesis reveals, God as Head (that is, Father of Family Oneness- Genesis 1:1, 6), God as Obedient Maker (that is, Son and Heir of this Family Oneness- Genesis 1:7), and God as Spirit (that is, Spirit of Elohim, of the Family Oneness-- Genesis 1:2).

So, to understand this realm, understand that the Lord of this Realm, God- *Elohim*, is like a Father intent on honoring his Son with a “wedding banquet” (Matthew 22:2). For, there will come a Day, when the Son accomplishes the Redemption of Family, bringing the *lost children of man* back home to the Father. So, there will be a glorious consummation of all that had been promised, as the Father honors His Son and rewards him with great celebration.

As disciples of the Kingdom of God, we are honored guests of this celebration, for we labor

with our Lord Jesus to bring about the redemption of the world. That the Father may honor the Son of God.

This is the central focus of our Kingdom, the celebration of the Son of God as the beginning and worthy recipient of all the riches and goodness of the coming Kingdom. This is our focus as disciples, because it is the focus of our Father God—to celebrate the Son of God as our Kingdom’s Redeeming Mashiach.

To understand the fullness of the Father’s lavish Kingdom celebration planned for the Son’s honor, consider the Last Days picture of the Kingdom, which promises in Ezekiel 45:7 the “prince’s portion” in the land, actual territory assigned to the House of Mashiach—that is, Mashiach and his heirs. And, understand that Mashiach’s rule is not over a temporal but a global and even heavenly realm spanning the “heavens” and the “earth” (Genesis 2:4). This eternal throne is portrayed in

Psalm 45:6, a picture of the glorious Kingdom of the Son of God and David who rules forever, giving his “sons” places of honor and rule in this eternal Kingdom (Ps. 45:16).

Note: Eternal Eunuch or Kinsman-Redeemer?

The idea of the Mashiach as an actual “Bridegroom” and reproducing actual sons and daughters, *princes* and *princesses* for his house, is offensive and incomprehensible to the Christian *religious* mind. For, Christian theology abstracts and sanitizes its objects of worship to make them inert objects of veneration. One young disciples was horrified to think Jesus Mashiach would ever have a “queen” (Ps. 45:9) or children. “What about us?” she wondered in fear. Christian theology is Self-involved, reducing Mashiach to an *eternal eunuch* for its own self-serving purposes.

In this respect, the Jewish view of Mashiach as Kinsman-Redeemer who is responsible for continuing the line of David by raising up sons to

continue the house and receive an inheritance is closer to the picture of Mashiach in his Kingdom. Suffice to say, the Bible's last days prophecies often allude to procreation and houses continuing and expanding. For me, it is comforting to know that the coming Kingdom of Mashiach will not be a sterile and abstracted mausoleum as anticipated by Christian philosophers. Male and female identities, procreation, families and lineages, are aspects of creation that will not be abolished but glorified in the New Age.

1. Celebrating Mashiach as Heir of Kingdom. 2:18

According to Jesus, *fasting*—to forego food and drink to earnestly seek God-- has a place in the Kingdom. But, it is the timing of *fasting* that distinguishes his disciples from those of the Pharisees.

The disciples of the Pharisees fast to express yearning, to pray for fulfillment of what God has

promised in his Word. Religion yearns for God's answer to questions and needs still pending.

But, the Kingdom finds its fulfillment in Jesus Mashiach. For the disciples of the Kingdom, your greatest needs have been fulfilled in Jesus Mashiach and the New Life of the Kingdom he brings to you.

When you are *reborn* of the Spirit, you have been made *alive by the Spirit* (John 1:12-13) and are now tasting and participating in the Kingdom's Reality which the prophets and saints in the past ages could only imagine. When the Holy Spirit slakes your *soul-thirst* with Living Water (John 7:37), this is a life in you which will never die but only grow.

As disciples of the Kingdom, we have everything in Jesus our Mashiach, "who has become for us wisdom from God, that is, our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). For these first disciples, the Kingdom had

come fully in the person of Jesus Mashiach, who dwelled among them.

2. Center of Kingdom Joy: Jesus Mashiach).2:20

So, the timing of *fasting* and the emotional ebb and flow of the Kingdom all depended on the person Jesus Mashiach.

For, Jesus is not only the Redeemer of his people, but he is the Heir and Bridegroom, whose inheritance becomes our inheritance and whose celebration is the source of our joy!

As we read in Matthew 22:2-3, our Heavenly Father himself organizes the Kingdom around the honor and celebration of his Son. So, when the Mashiach's presence is near, when we see Him working among us in power, then we celebrate his power and work! But, when he was taken from the earth to ascend to the throne of God, we now fast as we yearn for his revealed presence among us, his work, his sovereign rule, in our lives in this world of testing.

3. Containing New Life: Sacrifice old life). 2:21-22

Clearly, experiencing and advancing this glorious Kingdom of God on earth, living in the holy presence of the Lord Jesus Mashiach, and experiencing a joy and celebration that derives from the Father's own celebration and honor of his Son, the Mashiach. This Kingdom of God that is within our experience is our inheritance as the Sons of the Kingdom (Matthew 5:3). Clearly, this Kingdom is incomparably valuable. But, what does it take to experience the Kingdom now?

Jesus Mashiach leaves us with a final warning. The Kingdom is not a religion—to reduce Kingdom living to mere religious practice will strand you in this material world's limitations and human-constructed practices and rules. Sadly, the Kingdom in the Church Age was eventually overcome by the degrading influence of *fleshly religion* and its comforting and predictable practices. People flocked to this predictability,

abandoning the sacrifice and the need to take hold of a Kingdom that is only known by faith and which demanded one's all.

Therefore, Jesus warned that the active *life* of the kingdom and its expansion and life-changing power would ruin any *religious confinement*. The Kingdom must never be seen as simply Judaism + or even Christianity +.

Instead, the “new wine” of the Kingdom’s New Life, the Kingdom’s joyous celebration of its Bridegroom, such sheer joyous libation must only be put in “fresh wineskins.” (2:22). What is a “fresh wineskin” made of? A newly sacrificed animal. Only “sacrificial” worshippers, ready to abandon to old to take hold of New Life in Jesus, can contain the Kingdom’s celebration!

Question:

Further Discovery: