

Coach House Church BEACONS

THE BANQUET OF AGES

8TH OCTOBER 2020

I acknowledge Messianic Bibles for Israel as the source of this article.
"The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:7) Shalom Everyone, It's the Banquet of the Ages!

We are told that in the end times, there will be a "Great Feast" — a marriage celebration. The Lamb of God will be the bridegroom and the body of believers will be the bride. This banquet in heaven is not just a New Covenant concept; it is also anticipated in Orthodox Judaism. Jewish banquets were, and still are, held to honor the bride and bridegroom after a wedding. They bring together two families who are now joined together through matrimony. Similarly, God's banquet will bring together all who make up the kingdom of God. We see a foreshadowing of this banquet in Yeshua's parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In this story of a man and his two sons, one son takes his inheritance, goes out into the world, and experiences all he can until he becomes destitute.

When he realizes his plight, he returns home expecting to live in dishonor in his father's home for the rest of his life. Instead, his father prepares a great banquet in honor of his return. His brother is jealous and angry, but the father explains that he loves both of them equally and that both will share in his estate.

Likewise, Gentiles have been given a place in the kingdom of God in order to make the Jewish people jealous (Romans 11). And because of God's love, both Jew and Gentile will have a seat at the great Messianic Banquet.

God is promising a future banquet for all peoples, celebrating eternal life, and the restoration of Israel to its rightful place in God's design. The ancient sages and Rabbis understood this truth. They viewed many passages of Scripture as referring to both the Messiah and the Messianic banquet, such as Isaiah 25:6-9:

"On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines.

"On this mountain He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; He will remove His people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

"In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him, and He saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.'

Moreover, we are given ample opportunity to prepare ourselves for the incredible privilege of sitting at Messiah's table and rejoicing in His salvation.

Preparing for the Banquet

In Judaism, the Shabbat (Sabbath) is often thought of as a bride that we welcome into our homes every Friday evening. And we prepare for it. Before the Sabbath begins, we have already washed and set aside our Sabbath clothes, prepared the Sabbath food, and invited guests to our celebration. So, when Shabbat comes, we are ready to meet the bride.

And we rejoice. During Shabbat meals, we say prayers and sing songs that speak of the joy and shalom (peace) that Shabbat brings to us.

These meals have come to be called oneg, which in Hebrew literally means delight.

The entire Shabbat is about delighting in the Creator (Isaiah 58:13-14).

In this way, the Shabbat is also a taste of the Messianic era to come, a time of delighting in the Lord, at the marriage supper, and entering into the fullness of His rest:

As it states in Hebrews 4:9-10: "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His." We have a lot to look forward to. This banquet is destined to be the best Shabbat meal and fellowship that ever took place!

Yes, all are invited, but many will not respond, and others will not be ready. While Yeshua (Jesus) was on earth, He often ate with those whom the rest of society would consider outcasts, or at least, less than desirable company.

He made a point of saying, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Mark 2:17)

That repentance (Teshuva, returning to the LORD) is a vital part of our preparation for the banquet.

We see the necessity of preparation in Matthew 22:1-14 where Yeshua speaks of a king who arranged a wedding feast for his son. Those who were invited made

excuses for why they couldn't attend, so the king ordered his servants to invite all the common people instead.

Many of them came and enjoyed the king's hospitality. However, one came without wearing appropriate wedding clothes and was thrown out. Likewise, we are to spiritually clothe ourselves for this great day in appropriate ways, such as repentance. Moreover, God is not the only one doing the inviting. We are to do our part as well.

The Apostle Peter wrote, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Jewish tradition, many of which are recorded in the Talmud, speaks of a great feast that God will provide "for the righteous on the day He manifests His love for the seed of Isaac." (T: Pesachim 119)

At the end of the feast, when it is time to say grace, the task will fall to David (a forerunner of Messiah), who'll say, "I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psalm 116:13). This verse is spoken at the end of each Shabbat in Jewish homes during a service known as Havdalah, which marks the end of the Sabbath and the beginning of six workdays.

We also read a midrash (Jewish parable / story) in the Midrash Rabbah (M: Exodus Rabbah 25:8) that when the Lord brings Israel back into their land, they will see a table prepared in Paradise. At the table will be the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) as well as all the righteous.

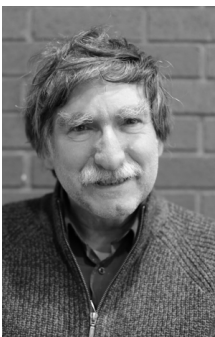
In this midrash, God will distribute wonderful foods to them, including fruit from the Garden of Eden, even from the Tree of Life. While this may sound a bit fanciful to some, it helps us understand how the Jewish People see God restoring the originally intended perfection of His creation in this Messianic Banquet.

And it is perhaps one reason why Jewish people pray three times a day for the coming of their Messiah, who will usher in this restoration to the Land, the Messianic era, and salvation:

"May the seed of David flourish speedily, and may You exalt in Your salvation. For in Your salvation do we hope all day. Blessed are you, Lord, who brings forth the horn of our salvation." (Excerpted from the Amidah (Standing) prayer)

Yeshua Himself referred to this time when He said at His last Passover banquet with His disciples, "I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29). That day is approaching when the great banquet will take place and Yeshua will drink with His bride.

May we all be ready.



STEVE WENT



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604

the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn