



The Zion Letter

The Monthly Newsletter of For Zion's Sake Ministries, Inc.
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Are Your Wedding Garments Without Spot or Wrinkle?

Does your wedding gown need a dry cleaning? The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 5:25-27, "*Husbands love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the Messianic community and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present to Himself the Bride in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*" In other words Yeshua/Jesus is preparing to return for a bride whose wedding gown is white, crisp, and fresh as it was the day it was lifted out of its' original box. Unfortunately we've been wearing this gown a little too long, and while we wait for His return, we have a tendency to sometimes spill a little coffee on the dress, splash some tomato sauce unintentionally, or accidentally trip and land in a puddle of mud. How do we keep that wedding gown clean and fresh, so we are ready to walk down the aisle with Yeshua?



ready for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, represented by the eighth and final Feast of the Lord outlined in Leviticus 23, The Feast of Sukkot or Tabernacles.

Is the Bride ready?

Are you a follower of Yeshua/Jesus? Do you think the Bride of Messiah is prepared to meet her heavenly Bridegroom? Is she really without "spot or wrinkle"? Revelation 19:7-8 says, "*Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has*

come and His bride has made herself ready.' It was given to her to clothe herself in the "fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." We learn some important things about the bride here: **1.** The bride has to "make herself ready", which indicates a process theologians refer to as **sanctification**. *Philippians 2:12 says, "Therefore my beloved, as you have always*

obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." That "working out of our salvation" is a process of dealing with our sins that begins at the moment of one's salvation and ends when we come face to face with Yeshua/Jesus. In other words, though we are given brand new spiritual wedding garments at the moment of our salvation, over time we sometimes drag them through the mud and soil them a bit. "*Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy (sanctified), useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work,*" 2 Timothy 2:21. "*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you com-*

As I write this article, it is the time of the Fall Feasts of the Lord outlined in Leviticus 23 and the Blood Red Moon coinciding with the Shemitah. God is so good to provide these feasts for us, because spiritually, they are like the dry cleaning store down town. The Fall Feasts are times set aside by the Lord to attend to "stains, spills, and accidents". You can try a home remedy if you like, but there is nothing like letting the "professionals" attend to a deep stain, and that is exactly how the Fall Feasts of the Lord are designed to help us. They are all about getting the stains out of your wedding gown in a timely fashion... 10 days to be exact of repentance and fasting beginning on Rosh Hashanah and ending on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement) assuring that you'll be spotless and fresh as a daisy, and

pletely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

2. Revelation 19:8 tells us that "the bride was given fine linen, white and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." Righteousness = sinlessness, so the more sinless the individual bride remains, the cleaner her wedding gown is going to be. Speaking to believers, 1 John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. In other words, we're all going to mess up, even with the truth of Messiah in us: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. So how do we overcome when we stumble and fall short of the glory of God's perfection? The answer is in 1 John 1:9-10, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." God's method of dry-cleaning our wedding gown is 1. Recognizing that we have sinned 2. Confessing our sins to Him 3. Turning back to Him with a new heart. He then promises to cleanse us of all unrighteousness (wash away our sins). How awesome is that!!!

What happens though, if we continue sinning once we are in Messiah? Hebrew 10:26-27 says, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth (Jesus), there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries." God knew when he saved you that you were going to mess up, so he provided a way back to that pure and holy state of total forgiveness. Nevertheless, some people receive the Lord and then go on sinning willfully. Not a good idea. Galatians 5:19-21 says, "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, keep a short list with God. Identify your sins, confess them, flee from temptation, and ask God to help you overcome your fleshly desires. Don't run to sin expecting God to forgive you when you have no intention of changing your ways or you'll be in trouble with God.

The list of sins that will keep you from going to heaven is listed above, but there are many other things like unforgiveness, gossip, slander and bearing false witness, lying, stealing, coveting your neighbor's belongings or spouse, hating people, haughtiness, disrespect, committing violent crime, failure to tithe, that are sinful. Committing these acts can really stain that beautiful gown too. So let me ask you again: Do you think the Bride is really ready to meet her heavenly Bridegroom?

The Problem? Recognizing our sins:

Do you find yourself going in circles with God? Do you feel like there's a roadblock to reaching your destiny and God's promises for your life? Are you experiencing repetitive painful situations such as rejection, backstabbing, failure to be noticed for your gifts? Perhaps the problem lies within you. If you keep going "around the mountain" and are sick and tired



of it, you might want to tell God you surrender and call on Him to deliver you. Sometimes we aren't even aware of the sin that entangles us, but if we are willing to admit that we might be the problem and confess that to God, He will surely send help and set your feet upon the Rock!

God's Appointed Times:

Each year God has set apart a time in the fall for His people to deal with and confess their sins in case they were too busy all year to do so. Gentiles who join with their Messianic Jewish friends are welcome to participate (See Numbers 15:14). Notice I said welcome, not obligated. In Hebrew, these appointed times are called *Moedim*. The word also means "feasts", as outlined in Leviticus 23. But it also means "appointments". The Feasts of Leviticus 23 aren't just Jewish holidays; they are appointed times to come into the house of the Lord and attend to specific spiritual tasks concerning the heart, they are the Feasts of the Lord! The Fall Feasts are about dealing with sin, confession, repentance, and God's judgment of the world (See Jonathan Cahn's Harbinger or the Mystery of the Shemittah). In fact the first Fall Feast Rosh Hashanah is historically called "Yom HaDin" The Day of Judgment. The Rabbis teach that the book of life is opened on Rosh Hashanah and that Jewish people have ten days (the Days of Awe) to repent and

confess their sins to God and to do good deeds called mitzvot in order that they might have their name inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year. The



Rabbis also teach that the Book of Life is closed, sealed for another year on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement).

Without Messiah, the pressure to attain righteousness through performing good deeds can be

overwhelming; but in Yeshua/Jesus these days are truly productive. Messianic Rabbis understand that The



Book of Life was actually last opened by the arch angel, Michael (Daniel 12). Daniel saw everyone whose name would ever be written in the book, then he sealed the book until the end of time, when it will be reopened on the Day of Judgment (See Revelation 20:11-15). This is of great comfort to us, because our salvation in Yeshua according to the Bible is never in question. Nevertheless, our sin nature is still at work and God knows we need help. The wonderful thing about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in Messiah is that the traditional service liturgy takes the worshiper through a litany of sins, both of commission and omission. As you proceed through the long list, the worshiper is faced with taking an honest spiritual inventory of his/her current life dealings. There is so much time spent on these subjects that the Holy Spirit has ample time to deal with every person who has a willing heart, and to bring about a deep cleansing of the spirit. The traditional Jewish observance of the Fall Feasts is still powerful to challenge all who celebrate them to deal with their sins and to get right with God (Even if the Book of Life isn't really opened and closed every year). The last feast is known in Leviticus 23 as "The time of rejoicing," it is called Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles. How appropriate, to have eight full days of rejoicing after such an intense experience!! God knows we need that too.

Summary of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot:

Rosh Hashanah (The Day of the Blowing of Trumpets), Lev 23:23, is about awakening the Bride to begin preparations for the arrival of her Bridegroom. You see in the

ancient Jewish wedding, the bride would prepare for a year after the engagement. Then one night, very late, the shofar would sound and the bridegroom would surprise his bride and begin the wedding feast! So, on Rosh Hashanah the shofar sounds and the bride begins her preparations; she cleans her wedding garments by confessing her sins from a sincere heart. Ten days later is Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement or covering). Yom Kippur is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. It is so solemn and holy that you can almost hear a pin drop in the synagogue. The only other time I can recall such a holy service is my wedding and the weddings of friends and family. For me, Yom Kippur is the wedding ceremony, where the Bridegroom fetches His bride, who has readied herself for the momentous day, and brings her to the Temple with all the guests watching. Holy, Holy, Holy! After Yom Kippur, there is a five day period symbolizing the Bridegroom taking His bride into His chamber that He has prepared for her. Then in Leviticus 23:39-40 we are told the eighth and final feast on Israel's calendar begins: Sukkot (also called Tabernacles and Booths). It is known in verse 40 as "Zaman Cherutainu," the time of our rejoicing! This is a picture of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Yeshua/Jesus has returned for His bride who has made herself spotless; the Holy wedding has taken place followed by the bride and Bridegroom entering their chamber. Then the party begins!!!! Sukkot is an extreme party, with eight days of feasting and celebration! Who can resist the joy of this season.



Conclusion:

The Messianic Jewish observance of the Fall Feasts is very helpful to the believer, because it is a regular time of intense introspection and revival, appointed by God Himself to help us in the process of sanctification, and to focus our attention on the time when the Bridegroom is prophetically scheduled to receive his bride into

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eternal matrimony. Because we know who makes atonement for our sins, we have no fear about whether our names get written in the Book of Life. We only have to look to Yeshua to help us be bright and beautiful on that momentous day when the Bridegroom watches us walk down the aisle with the whole world watching in awe! There is so much more to these feasts than I have been able to share in this article, so if you missed our celebrations and teachings this year you may order a CD set of all the teachings. (see details in the yellow box on the previous page).

I also encourage you to come out and learn about the Feasts next year. Nevertheless, God gives you another chance; it's called "Hanukkah." You see, in the days of the Maccabees around 165 B.C., the Temple that the Hebrew people worshiped in had been desecrated and they were under foreign rule. They couldn't celebrate the Fall Feasts, so when they took back the Temple from the Syrians in 165 B.C. they celebrated Sukkot for eight days. They called it Hanukkah! So if you missed the feasts this year, there is grace. Come to our "Hanukkah" Celebration!

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Shalom and special thanks to those of you who support For Zion's Sake Ministries with your prayers and gifts!

In Messiah's love,
Rabbi Joe and Dawn