



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?

Is the Bride Ready?

Are you a follower of Yeshua (Jesus)? I have a question, "Do you think the Bride of Messiah is prepared to meet her heavenly Bridegroom? Is she really without spot or wrinkle?" 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, so 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 an ancient Jewish wedding, after the betrothal, the Bridegroom would leave his fiancé for up to a year while he went to prepare a place for her in his father's house (John 14:2). While he built on a room or two, the bride would prepare herself and sew a gown of pure white linen. When a person is "born again" we are commanded to be baptized (Luke 3:21-22, MT 28:19-20). It is customary for a person to wear a white robe as they are immersed. The white robe represents that we have received a wedding garment of salvation. The verse above and the verse to follow indicate that a period of sanctification also takes place with salvation. Sanctification represents that year of separation from the bridegroom in the ancient Jewish wedding. This next verse also supports that we, as the bride of Messiah, are given a linen wedding garment. 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.*"

The bride is the one to make herself ready; this 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." The "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 completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" (1Thes.5:23). We are told in Revelation 19:8, "*the bride was given fine linen, white and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*" Righteousness equals being sinless, so the more sinless the individual 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 1John 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 cleaning our wedding gown is to first recognize that

we have sinned and secondly we must confess our sins to Him. The third step is to turn 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? Hebrews 10:26-27 says, *“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth (Yeshua), 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 go on sinning willfully. This is not a good idea. In Galatians 5:19-21 we are told, *“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.

The list of sins that will keep you from going to heaven is listed above, but there are many other sins like unforgiveness, gossip, slander, bearing false witness, lying, stealing, coveting your neighbor's belongings or spouse, hating people, haughtiness, disrespect, committing violent crime, and failure to tithe. Committing these acts can really stain that beautiful “spotless” gown. So let me ask you again, “Do you think the Bride is really ready to meet her heavenly Bridegroom, or is there a need for repentance?” Many people struggle to repent; they would rather run from God. Yet I pray for the Spirit of repentance, because when I stumble I know that true repentance sets me free and releases God's blessings on my life!

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 repent. Gentiles who join with their Messianic Jewish friends are welcome to participate (See Numbers 15:14). Notice I said they are “welcome to” not “obligated to”. 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).

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 Daniel was commanded to seal up the book until the end of time when it will be reopened on the Day of Judgment (see Matthew 25:31-46, Joel 3:2, Daniel 7, 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 also 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 an eight-day feast called Sukkot/the Feast of Tabernacles. How appropriate, to have eight full days of rejoicing after such an intense experience! God knows we need a time of rejoicing 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. In the ancient Jewish wedding, the bride would prepare for a year after the engagement. Then late one night, the shofar would sound and the bridegroom would surprise his bride and begin the

wedding feast! 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), and 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. He then brings her to the Temple with all the guests watching. Holy, Holy, Holy!

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Special High Holiday Service Schedule



Rosh Hashanah
Sunday Sept 9th - 6:30 pm

Yom Kippur: Kol Nidre
Tues Sept 18th - 6:30 pm
[fasting begins]

Neila Service (Closing the Gates)
Wednesday Sept 19th - 6:30 pm
followed by break-fast



All above services will be held at
1128 New Hampshire Avenue, Bristol

Sukkot In the Mountains

1000 Hendrickson Lane, Bluff City, TN

September 28th — 30th

Join us for a sukkot weekend on a 100 acre farm in the mountains of Tennessee
Featuring: Rabbi Joe, Debora Kline, Iantorno, and other special guests

Campfires, cookouts, hayrides, dance, and other great activities planned.
A family & kid-friendly event!



Go to forzionsake.org
for more information, including pricing
Or see the insert provided

****Go to Forzionsake.org to signup for this event****

An email promotion will be coming this week with a direct signup link

You may also mail in the form with payment

Or call the office (276) 644-1678

2 different CD series available for a gift of \$25 or more: "The Bridegroom & the Second Coming" or "The Fall Feasts" (specify which series you would like with your order).

After Yom Kippur, there is a five day period symbolizing the Bridegroom taking His bride into the chamber that He has prepared for her. In Leviticus 23:39-40 we are told the eighth and final feast on the Biblical calendar begins. This final feast is Sukkot (also called Tabernacles or 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 celebration begins! Sukkot is an exuberant party, with eight days of feasting and celebrating! 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 eternal matrimony. Because we know who makes atonement for our sins, we have no fear about whether our name is 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 a cloud of Angels watching! 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.

Join us for our Fall Feast services, especially "Sukkot in the Mountains"! Go to www.forzionsake.org and sign up for updates and like us on Facebook.

Shalom and special thanks to those of you who support For Zion's Sake Ministries with your prayers and gifts! We couldn't do it without you.

In Messiah's love,
Rabbi Joe and Dawn