

# Does YHWH Require a Future Temple Building? Part 3

## Part 3

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### Prelude

The inspiration for this part 3 came from reading Michael Heiser's book 'The Unseen Realm' which I enthusiastically recommend to anyone pursuing a better understanding of YHWH system of operation, His *modus operandi*, which is the same for both the heavenly and terrestrial realms. Heiser removes much of the confusion surrounding YHWH's intentions for the terrestrial realm. He explores the parallels between the heavenly and earthly kingdoms and YHWH's ultimate programme for this creation. Whilst the following includes several excerpts from the book they are a small reflection of the true worth of Mr. Heiser's presentation.

### YHWH's Modus Operandi

One of the perils in the exegesis of Scripture is to dismiss the literal as nothing more than a 'figure of speech' thereby losing the real essence behind the words and statements. We must avoid reducing what is meant literally to being figurative. But even then, our problem is interpreting what is said from a Hebraic mind-set. Scripture provides many clues about how YHWH interacts with His heavenly host and how He runs His kingdom but often and possibly due to how the information is presented, the quintessence is lost. Hopefully the following will clarify YHWH's desire for His earthly creation and the role humanity is to play.

Scripture clearly defines YHWH's heavenly system to be hierarchical with seraphim, cherubim, sons of El, archangels and angels, all playing definitive roles, although the status quo may not be of this order. Scripture also reveals that YHWH operates His kingdom through a council, the members of which are actively involved in both policy and administration.

One of the most revealing commentaries supporting the conception of a heavenly council is the heavenly scene described by the prophet Micaiah concerning the true explanation of the state of false prophecy which Ahab and Jehoshaphat have just heard,

*Then he said, "Therefore hear the word of YHWH: I saw YHWH sitting on His throne, and all the host of the heavens standing by Him, on His right and on His left. And YHWH said, 'Who shall entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' And this one said this, and another said that. And a spirit came forward and stood before YHWH and said, 'Let me entice him.' (2 Chr.18:19).*

Here the prophet tells how he has seen Yahuwah's throne, 'and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left,' in the posture of obedient vassals. Yahuwah declares His purpose to deceive Ahab and to bring him to his death at Ramoth-Gilead, and asks His council for a volunteer to carry it out. After several suggestions have been made, 'the spirit' (possibly of prophetic inspiration) offers himself and promises to become a lying spirit in the mouth of all Ahab's prophets. From the account, Micaiah has been admitted to the heavenly council, so far as to overhear and subsequently describe its proceedings. He gives his report as 'the word of Yahuwah,' meaning what is recorded is a description of something which has actually taken place in heaven. Jeremiah also refers to a 'council of YHWH' in his differentiation of the true from the false prophets in chapter 23,

<sup>18</sup>For who has stood in the counsel (*sôd*) of YHWH, and has seen and heard His word? Who has listened to His word and obeyed it? <sup>21</sup>I did not send these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.<sup>22</sup> But if they had stood in My counsel, (*sôd*) then they would have let My people hear My Words, and they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds.

However, the term (*sôd*) may not only denote a 'council' or an 'assembly' but also a decision as is the case in Amos,

*For the Master YHWH does no matter unless He reveals His secret (*sôd*) to His servants the prophets.*  
(Amos3:7).

But there is no question as to the reality of the (*sôd*) in the sense of a 'heavenly council' for Jeremiah. The word is the same as that which he uses elsewhere to describe an earthly assembly, (Jer.6:11, 15:17). Then we have Isaiah's account of his encounter with YHWH's council described in chapter 6. The prophet, in awe of YHWH's holiness and that of the assembly, cries out in distain at his unclean lips. Consequently, one of the seraphim cauterizes his lips with a hot stone from the altar and declares that his iniquity is taken away and his sin expiated. Only after this cleansing is the prophet able to participate and join in the deliberations of the council. YHWH asks the question, *who will go for 'us'* that is, for the body of councillors and Isaiah volunteers. The point to be made is that the 'council of YHWH' is as much a reality as YHWH himself. YHWH is the head, His councillors are at His call, they are His angelic attendants and administrators; His advisory council and as we will see YHWH refers to the members of His council as *elohim*, (small 'e').

That the council members are actively involved in executing YHWH's directives can be seen in His chastisement for their maladministration of the affairs of men as recorded by the Psalmist,

*Elohim stands in the congregation of El; He judges in the midst of the *elohim*. How long would you judge perversely, and show partiality to the wrong? Give right-ruling to the poor and fatherless, do right to the afflicted and needy. Rescue the poor and needy; Deliver them from the hand of the wrong. They do not know, nor do they understand, They walk about in darkness. All the foundations of the earth are shaken. I have said, "You are *elohim*, and all of you are sons of the Most High."*  
(Ps.82:1-6).

This Psalm requires a little discernment, and we need to understand YHWH's system of administration. First observation is that the Psalm identifies the council members as 'sons of El' and their misconduct. Consequently, YHWH rebukes them and dictates the guidelines for acceptable conduct. But YHWH does not prescribe the means of achieving what is desired, that is left to the freewill of the council members. Daniel provides further confirmation of the council members' active involvement in both policy and its execution when reporting the decreed punishment upon Nebuchadnezzar. Suitably Daniel refers to the council members as 'watchers, a.k.a. administrators,

*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets over it the basest of men.* (Dan.4:17).

It is probable that the council members; the 'sons of El' of Ps.82 are the same divine beings identified for final judgement in Isa.24:21 and 1Cor.6:3.

The above evidences the existence of a definitive structure for the heavenly realm – a literal concept of a heavenly council of divine beings actively involved in the administration of YHWH's heavenly kingdom. To a degree it is a democracy with YHWH at its head and a 'host' managing with Him via a 'council of YHWH.' This begs the question, *why does YHWH need a council?* He doesn't but it is clear that He has one. In this case need is no argument against existence. It is His choice of administration and as we will see it was meant as the prototype for the terrestrial realm.

## Elohim and elohim

Let us revisit Psalm 82, concentrating on verses 1, 6 and 7,

*<sup>1</sup>Elohim stands in the congregation of El; He judges in the midst of the elohim. <sup>6</sup>I have said, "You are elohim, and all of you are sons of the Most High." <sup>7</sup> "But as men you die, and fall as one of the heads."*

It was explained above how this Psalm relates to a meeting YHWH has called with His council members to discuss the misconduct of some of those members. What was not mentioned is that in verse 1 the term elohim appears twice; the first occasion it is in its singular form since the grammar has it the subject of a singular verb 'stands.' The second elohim however, must be plural since you cannot be in the midst of one. Verse 6 subsequently refers to these council members as 'sons of the Most High, a reference to YHWH. Read together verses 1 and 6 tell us that YHWH presides over an assembly of elohim whom He considers His 'sons.' The Hebrew is (*Beney Elyon*); 'sons of Elohim/El,' Heiser notes that this term is used in ancient manuscripts to describe a higher level of authority or responsibility and is never synonymous with the Hebrew (*Malak*) used to denote an angel or messenger; 'sons of El' appears to have a higher status quo. In a nut shell the 'sons of Elohim' are collectively the divine counsel through whom YHWH administers His heavenly kingdom.

Our greatest fault is to interpret what is written in accordance with modern day conceptions without considering the author's conception of what he wrote. To explain, we understand the description elohim in terms of particular attributes, whereas the ancients considered elohim to be 'a place of residence' term, i.e. elohim were inhabitants of the spiritual world and confined the term to this meaning. Verse 7 of Ps.82 reinforces this to be a correct interpretation of ancient thought; inhabitants of the spiritual realm were meant to have immortality but due to their misconduct these particular elohim (sons of El) will be made lower and destined to '*die like men.*' But Scripture is clear, YHWH alone is deserving of worship from all the other elohim; there is no equality with YHWH,

*And the heavens praise Your wonders, O YHWH, Your trustworthiness, too, In the assembly of the set-apart ones. For who in the heavens is comparable to YHWH? Who among the sons of El is like YHWH? El is greatly feared in the company of the set-apart ones. And awesome above all those around him. (Ps.89:5-7).*

Other verses confirming YHWH's uniqueness are Exod.15:11, 1Kings.8:23, 22:19, PS.95:3 etc.

Furthermore, we should not read a Trinitarian notion in to Ps.82:1 this is clearly not the case; the Psalm has YHWH judging these other elohim for corrupt behaviour. Equally flawed is the view that the other elohim or 'sons of El' refers to humans, specifically descendants of Shem. That the 'sons of El' were other than divine beings cannot be reconciled with Scripture and whilst Ps.82 and 89 are good examples Job's comment is explicit,

*Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding. Who set its measurements, if you know? Or who stretched the line upon it? Upon what were its foundations sunk? Or who laid its corner-stone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy? (Job.38:4-7).*

Here we are told that the 'sons of El' were present at the beginning (foundation) of creation and before humans had been created. This passage from Job brings us directly to Genesis chapter 1

## The Confusions Arising From Gen.1:26 and 27

*And Elohim said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth and over all the creeping creatures that creep on the earth.(Gen.1:26).*

*And Elohim created the man in His image, in the image of Elohim He created him – male and female He created them. (Gen.1:27).*

The plurality of verse 26 supports all we have said above; the verse has YHWH presenting His idea to others who are present. Again, we have (YHWH Elohim) addressing his divine counsel, the members of which, according to Job, are the 'sons of Elohim' and themselves *elohim* (Ps.82:1). But it was not a group decision verse 27 is emphatic, it was YHWH's idea which He subsequently communicated to His divine counsel. The backdrop portrayed shows a participatory nature between YHWH and His Host. It is the head of the Host (YHWH) informing His divine counsel of His decision to create humankind, in reality He is addressing the council, "Hey let's create humankind" - their positive response is anticipated.

Verse 27 is another source of misperception, even giving rise to the belief that YHWH must be both male and female; such a basic interpretation is both ignorant and naive. The term 'image' has nothing to do with appearance or form, it is clear from verse 26 the issue is one of dominion and not human anatomy. Furthermore the plurality of verse 26 and the different descriptions of YHWH's throne in the Scriptures together prohibit an anatomical interpretation of any kind. More specifically, nowhere is the heavenly host described in terms of male or female and Mashiach, when describing the Host, inferred such an interpretation to be a misconception (Mark.12:25). Verse 27 is clarifying that humanity will comprise both male and female and each will have a responsible role to play in YHWH's administration.

### **Image Means Imitation**

But what of the statement *Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness?* Now we understand that YHWH operates through the 'sons of El' who execute His will as His representatives. we can consider the term 'image' in a different light. But first we need to recognize the integrity between the heavenly and earthly realms. Both realms operate in parallel with each other; YHWH has the same agenda for both. Both worship in synchronization, observing the same Sabbaths and festivals on the same days according to the same calendar. What is more YHWH's calendar has never changed. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Enoch, Jubilees etc. all testify to these truths.

We have established that YHWH created other *elohim* called the 'sons of El' who constitute the 'council of YHWH' and help Him manage His heavenly kingdom. These 'sons of El' execute His will as His representatives. As we have just said, the heavenly and terrestrial realms are not mutually exclusive, they operate in tandem and we must interpret 'image' in Gen.1:26 with this understanding. Heiser promotes the philosophy that Genesis 1 uses the word image in its verb form to portray a function but what function? The answer is found in the plurality of the verse and its reference to the divine 'sons of El.' Putting all this together, the earthly kingdom was to emulate the heavenly prototype with humankind as earthly 'sons of El' forming an earthly 'council of YHWH' and managing alongside Him in the exact 'image' of the heavenly organization. This was YHWH's program for the terrestrial realm, regrettably Adam threw a spike into the works interrupting (but not ending) YHWH's scenario; YHWH's original intention remains, only His *modus operandi* has changed.

There is the argument that image should be interpreted in terms of attributes, that is to say that humankind was created with some of the characteristics of the divine beings. No doubt this is true but is it sufficient enough for the definition of 'image' in the context of Gen.1? Whilst there are some attributes specific to humankind, animals share a lot of the same attributes with humanity; intelligence, emotions, morals (most species of animals take care of their young), ability to communicate, etc. Animal cognition precludes us from defining 'image' solely in terms of attributes.

### **The End Game**

YHWH did not create the terrestrial realm out of some need; the same can be said of the heavenly realm. A complete and perfect being without deficiencies does not have needs. There is nothing YHWH cannot do for Himself. But He chose to create, just as He chose to involve others; on the one hand divine beings and on the other hand humans each to participate through a council of 'sons of El.' What becomes immediately obvious is

that such a system of governance has no room for its principal (YHWH) to be isolated or separated from the governing body (the Council of YHWH: 'sons of El').

In the heavenly realm the seat of governance is YHWH's throne and in the terrestrial realm it was intended to be His 'Garden.' It should be remembered that not all of earth was Eden, Eden was a specific location on the earth and circumscribed by geographical markers (Gen.2:8-14). Scripture makes it clear that the 'Garden' and the rest of the earth were very distinct. Adam was told to take care and cultivate the 'Garden' whereas he was told to subdue and rule over the rest of the earth. The 'Garden' did not need subjugation it was exactly what YHWH wanted; it was lacking nothing, it was perfect, enabling YHWH's presence to walk amongst it. Whereas the rest of the earth is described as 'good' by YHWH but good is not perfect and YHWH was most probably just confirming the earth was sufficient to meet the parameters of its design.

Eden is where YHWH's earthly kingdom began and it is no surprise to find Scripture completing the age of man with a restored 'Garden.' But fundamental to the end time Edenic vision is YHWH's earthly council. There are two verses in the apostle's epistle to the Roman congregation we may quote,

*For the whole of creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of Elohim. (Rom.8:19).*

*For we know that all the creation groans together, and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (Rom.8:22).*

The first verse has to be referring to the earthly 'sons of El' because the heavenly council has never been concealed or shut off from the terrestrial realm.<sup>1</sup> What these verses are saying is that creation itself will not find rest until the age of the 'sons of El' i.e. the millennial rule. A little earlier the apostle confirms YHWH's adoption of an earthly family,

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of Elohim, these are sons of Elohim. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of Elohim. (Rom.8:14-16).*

Mashiach also refers to those who follow Him as 'sons of El' (Matt.5:45). Not until Mashiach has collected the 'sons of El' being His 'Body of Believers' and transported them to the Land will the earth enjoy a peace without the shedding of blood and all species living in harmony as alluded to in Part 1. What we are describing here is the millennial kingdom of Mashiach. Just as in the beginning there will be an earth with a specific location where YHWH will dwell and from which He and His council will direct the affairs of humanity. That place is the Land promised to Avraham. That this is a correct understanding we need only go to Daniel's prophecy concerning the four end time kingdoms in chapter 7, which were to be superseded by Mashiach's kingdom,

*As for me, Daniel, my spirit was pierced within my body, and the visions of my head alarmed me. I drew near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the certainty of all this. And he spoke to me and made known to me the interpretation of the matters: These great beasts, which are four, are four sovereigns which rise up from the earth. Then the set-apart ones of the Most High (Sons of El) shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' (Dan.7:15-18).*

Verse 18 is describing a nation of YHWH's councilors; the earthly 'sons of El' ruling jointly with Him as confirmed in Rev.20:6.

## **The Reality of YHWH's Response to Babel.**

Adam's transgression was only a 'speed bump' in YHWH's intentions for an earthly kingdom. The flood should have corrected the effect of Adam's transgression but the Babel incident evidences that the problem surpassed

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the books of Enoch and Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls

the flood. The full impact of YHWH's response to the 'tower of Babel' is rarely understood because readers fail to connect all the associated Tanakh references, relying wholly on the report in Gen.11:1-9 and ignoring the complementary narrative given in Deut.32:8-9. So let us examine these two areas of Scripture and expose the full picture: it is only necessary to look at verses 5-9 in Genesis,

*Then YHWH came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And YHWH said, "Look, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do! And now, they are not going to be withheld from doing whatever they plan to do. Come, let us go there and confuse their language, so that they do not understand one another's speech." And YHWH scattered them from there, over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. That is why its name was called Babel, because there YHWH confused the language of all the earth, and from there YHWH scattered them over the face of all the earth. (Gen.11:5-9).*

*<sup>8</sup>When YHWH gave the nations their inheritance when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of El. \*<sup>9</sup>For the portion of YHWH is His people, Ya'akov His allotted inheritance. (Deut.32:8-9).*

\*Most translations read 'sons of Israel' due to disparities between manuscripts but the Dead Sea Scrolls endorses 'sons of El' to be the correct rendering. Furthermore when we realize that verse 8 is referring to Babel, an incident well before Abraham's calling and the existence of Israel, 'sons of Israel' cannot possibly be accurate. **In the Septuagint Deut.32:8 reads 'angels of god.'**

In effect YHWH scattered the people and they were apportioned according to the number of the 'sons of El' but what does this mean?

Whilst Deuteronomy expounds upon what is said in Genesis the point is hidden in the detail. When YHWH scattered the nations at Babel He disinherited the people – disinherited humanity. Deuteronomy goes on to record that YHWH subsequently, chose for Himself a specific lineage from one man; Abraham whose descendants, Israel, would become His inheritance. What all this means is that YHWH rejected the nations, they would no longer be in a relationship with Him but under the authority of the divine council and matched with false idols/elohim. Substantiation for this understanding can be found in another passage from Deuteronomy,

*And lest you lift up your eyes to the heavens, and shall see the sun, and the moon, and the stars – all the host of the heavens – and you be drawn away into bowing down to them and serving them, which YHWH your Elohim has allotted to all the peoples under all the heavens. But YHWH has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Mitsrayim, to be His people, an inheritance, as it is today. (Deut.4:19-20).*

Here we are told that YHWH has allotted false idols to the nations. So, in the wake of Babel the nations were to be forsaken by YHWH and matched up with various other false gods. This explains the situation today and the various religions.

What we have is YHWH giving the nations 'their inheritance' (false gods) and Ya'akov (Israel) would be His inheritance. However, when Israel also failed to meet YHWH's expectations, He decided that He alone could be trusted with accomplishing His will. He would, therefore, Himself become man through whom his process of cleansing could begin. His glory residing behind a temple curtain proved inadequate, now He must personally indwell in those who chose to follow Him. Part 1 described how, through cleansing, YHWH will create a rejuvenated humankind in whom the fullness of His spirit shall indwell enabling them to abide alongside and rule with Him,

*"And no longer do I hide My face from them, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house (family) of Israel," declares the Master YHWH. (Ezek.39:29).*

It should be noted that this declaration precedes the verses associated with the temple in which His glory remains hidden.

The future is in the past (Isa.46:10, Eccl.1:9), in the beginning YHWH created a 'Garden' a holy environment on earth in which his presence could mingle with humankind. Obviously, this was His first desire, a desire that has never diminished. It is in the age succeeding this, i.e. the millennium that YHWH will once again create a holy environment (the Land and the City) and again walk amongst His creation, fulfilling His original desire. In the words of Heiser, YHWH is re-tooling the original template.

I have said several times in other articles that YHWH knows only one type of relationship; a covenant relationship culminating with a covenant of marriage. Not only does the Tanakh prove this but a correct understanding of Revelation shows that Mashiach will live with His bride – in the millennium. Indeed, the primary conceptual metaphor on which Revelation rests is the ancient Hebrew marriage contract but this is a separate study. Suffice to say, the millennium is when Mashiach; the groom will live with His 'Body of Believers;' His bride, in the new Garden of Eden. Today we are in the betrothal phase of this marriage and the next section will show how our betrothal and marriage to the 'Lamb' aligns exactly with ancient Hebrew custom.

## **A Betrothal and a Wedding - Ancient Hebrew Custom**

What many readers of the Scriptures do not comprehend is that both the Tanakh and the Brit Hadashah contain many metaphors relying on knowledge of ancient Hebrew custom for a complete understanding of what is written. In fact YHWH always lays things out with a distinctly Hebraic cultural concept in the background; the book of Revelation is probably the most perfect example of this. Incidentally, scholars now accept that as much as ninety percent of the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) originated in the Hebrew language as explained in Part 4. We will now consider some of the metaphors Mashiach used to illustrate the marriage relationship intended for all who believe in Him, starting with Rev.3:20,

*See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me. (Rev.3:20).*

\*Most translations use alternatives for sup such as eat, dine etc. but as we will see the spirit of Mashiach's message is related to tradition associated with a Hebrew marriage and most specifically the relevance of consuming wine.

The understanding most readers take from this verse is that Mashiach is appealing to all mankind, standing at their hearts door asking to be let in. As correct as this may be, the greater prominence of Mashiach's words rely on the reader's knowledge of the ancient formalities associated with a Hebrew wedding. Without this knowledge the true essence of Mashiach's statement is lost.

In accordance with ancient custom a Hebrew marriage consisted of two ceremonies each marked by a celebration. First was the betrothal and later, the wedding. It is important for us to realise that at the betrothal the woman was legally married, although she still remained in her father's house. She could not belong to another man unless she was divorced from her betrothed. The wedding meant only that the betrothed woman was brought from her father's house to the house of her groom, and the legal tie with him consummated.

In accordance with custom, when the prospective groom decided to officially start the formalities it was customary for him and his father to visit the potential bride's home. They carried with them a betrothal cup, wine and the bride price. The groom with his father would knock on the door. The bride's father would peek through the window and ask the bride whether or not he should open the door. Her consent signified a commitment to work through the betrothal and marriage processes. If her response was negative the door would not be opened and groom would make a U-turn and leave. Opening the door was evidence of the bride's willingness to enter into a covenant of betrothal: it was the initial step towards a marriage which is the essence behind Rev.3:20. Mashiach is saying I am the groom, if you open the door I will come in and restoration through betrothal can begin. In other words Mashiach is asking will you enter into a covenant of betrothal with Me? But just as with the ancient Hebrew bride it is our choice whether or not the door is opened.

It was necessary for the groom and his father to take wine with them and not just for celebration. It was customary for four cups of wine to be drunk at specific times during the betrothal and marriage proceedings.

These were in effect 'milestones' sealing the individual stages of commitment reached by the bride and groom as formalities progressed. The first cup; the cup of sanctification or servanthood, was consumed almost immediately the betrothal negotiations commenced. The groom, his father and every adult member of the bride's family participated: each member of each family was agreeing to serve the other family. In effect they were making a commitment to become one united family and it is the consumption of this first cup of wine to which Mashiach refers in Rev.3:20.

On completion of the betrothal negotiations, including the bride price and the groom's contribution to the cost of the wedding etc. the parties would enjoy a meal together and the second cup of wine; the cup of bargaining and friendship would be consumed. This cup was only drunk by the two fathers and the bride and groom; the four were covenanting that the two families would be eternal friends each with the other.

A marriage contract would now be drawn up containing the terms and conditions resulting from the betrothal negotiations. In Hebrew it is called a '*ketubah*' suffice to say it usually had five sections to it. Once again, we see a parallel to the believer's marriage relationship with Mashiach where the five books of the Torah constitute the marriage '*ketubah*'. Furthermore, not only do the five books of Torah contain identical information to that in the '*ketubah*' of the ancient Hebrew wedding, but the Torah also presents the information in exactly the same sequence. Isn't that amazing! Thus, the Torah is in effect a marriage contract. A formal meal would be held to celebrate the signing of the marriage contract which would be sealed via a third cup of wine; the cup of inheritance. This cup was consumed only by the bride and groom and signified their commitment each to the other. Neither the bride nor the groom would consume anymore wine until the wedding ceremony itself when the fourth and final cup would be drunk. This brings us to another of Mashiach's metaphors. It was with ancient marriage custom in mind that, at His last Pesach with His disciples, He told them that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine again (a reference to the fourth cup) until the coming of His Father's kingdom at the Eighth Day and after His marriage to His bride (Matt.26:29). Mashiach actually consumed the first, second and third cups of wine during His meal with the disciples. The third cup is also called the cup of inheritance and by removing their sandals and washing each of the disciple's feet Mashiach was following the ancient covenant tradition associated with inheritance. By this act Mashiach was assuring the disciples of their inheritance with Him. In ancient times this was called the 'sandal covenant of inheritance.' It was at this Pesach meal that Mashiach sealed His bond via the wine and bread but not only with His disciples. Mashiach was not bonding with only those present at the meal but through them He was bonding to his future bride: in reality the disciples represented the 'whole bride' at that meal. Just as with ancient custom this meal marked a definitive milestone in the betrothal proceedings thus the bride had to be present.

Upon signing the marriage contract the groom now had the responsibility to go and build a home which was usually in the form of a room annexed to his father's house. Exactly what Mashiach promised to do (John 14:1-3). As the room came towards completion the groom would announce his imminent wedding and would select his groomsmen. The groomsmen were themselves all virgins and his relatives. (These are the 144,000 in Revelation). Around this time the bride's family would begin to prepare a feast. Just before the actual feast the bridesmaids would buy oil for their lamps in readiness for the groom's arrival to collect his bride and escort her to the feast. The groom would come between 6:00pm and midnight, having collected together all his groomsmen. When the bridesmaids learnt the groom was coming they would light their lamps to show him the way and forewarn the bride her groom was on his way. The lit lamps were also a sign that the bride had not changed her mind – no lights meant no wedding. Does this not bring to mind the parable of the wise and foolish virgins?

Finally on the aspect of betrothal and marriage immediately before the wedding ceremony itself the bridesmaids would escort the bride to the mikveh, after bathing, the bridesmaids would anoint her with fragrant oils and dress her in her wedding garments. The bride is now ready for the actual wedding itself. Here again we have another parallel when believers undergo the 'seventh Day' cleansing promised by YHWH, before entering the Land,

*For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the countries and return you to your own soil. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I*



*will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezek.36:24-27)*

*And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; **and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** (Ezek.36:28).*

Verses 24 through 27 constitute the cleansing process which is the precondition to verse 28. In the eyes of YHWH the highlighted words constitute a covenant (marriage covenant) relationship, just as they did at Sinai but the wedding is still to take place. Furthermore YHWH will clothe believers with his 'robe of righteousness' (Isa.61:10) being the bridal wedding garment in conformance with ancient custom and confirmed in Matt.22:11-13.

Another point of note is that ancient custom required the groom also to mikveh which Mashiach did in the Jordan River. (Matt.3:16). There are other metaphors used by Mashiach which specifically relate to ancient Hebrew wedding customs, His comment in Matt.23:37 and Mar.13:35. Then there is Mashiach's statement in John 14:2-3 to the disciples that He is going to prepare a home which was a customary duty of the prospective groom; even the physical arrangement described for the room corresponds with tradition.

## Conclusion

This Part 3 deliberates the issue of a millennial temple from two additional but very distinct perspectives; firstly YHWH's parameters for the operation and maintenance of His earthly kingdom and secondly, the covenant relationship YHWH desires with His believers, the culmination of which is a marriage. Jeremiah chapter 33, a millennial chapter confirms what we have said,

*Thus said YHWH, "In this place of which you say, 'It is dried up, without man and without beast,' in the cities of Yehudah, in the streets of Yerushalayim that are deserted, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, there shall once again be heard the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who are saying, 'Praise YHWH of hosts, for YHWH is good, for His kindness is forever,' of those who are bringing the offering of praise into the House of YHWH. For I shall turn back the captivity of the land, as at the first," declares YHWH. (Jer.33:10-11).*

Why specifically refer to the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride? It is a reference to YHWH and His bride living in the 'Garden,' i.e. the Land. Consider the following passage from Deuteronomy,

*If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under the heavens, from there YHWH your Elohim does gather you, and from there He does fetch (**lâqach**) you. And YHWH your Elohim shall bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He shall do good to you, and increase you more than your fathers. (Deut.30:4-5).*

Moshe is here prophesying the end time gathering of Israel. The Hebrew *lâqach* can be specifically applied to taking a bride or wife thus this passages correlates exactly with Jeremiah.

Accepting Mashiach into one's life is the first step; acceptance is akin to the bride's agreement to open the door to admit the groom and his father and initiate the betrothal process leading to a marriage. Let us again look at Rev.3:20,

*See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me. (Rev.3:20).*

What we have here is a parallel with the events at Mt. Sinai where there was an offer of marriage from YHWH (Exod.19:5) and an acceptance by the people (Exod.24:7). Similarly Mashiach standing at the door is His offer of marriage. Opening the door is to invite Mashiach into one's life and to accept His offer.

Finally let us refer to a couple of comments from Mashiach in His letters to the Philadelphians and Laodiceans, because these two particular letters more than the others portray the situation facing believers today. The essence of the message is the presence of false prophets/teachers described as the 'Synagogue of Satan' (this reference is generic it is not meant to be confined to a particular synagogue or even Judaism). The letter is one of encouragement and confirms a reward awaiting those who remain faithful,

To the Philadelphians:

*Because you have guarded My Word of endurance, I also shall guard you from the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world, to try those who dwell on the earth. See, I am coming speedily! Hold what you have that no one take your crown. He who overcomes, I shall make him a supporting post in the Dwelling Place of My Elohim, and he shall by no means go out. And I shall write on him the Name of My Elohim and the name of the city of My Elohim, the renewed Yerushalayim, which comes down out of the heaven from My Elohim, and My renewed Name. (Rev.3:10-12)*

The reward is to personally carry Elohim's name, just as the bride ultimately takes the name of the groom.

To the Laodiceans:

*See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I shall give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev.3:20-21).*

Here again the overture is that of betrothal, ultimately the bride and groom sitting together. All things considered there is no denying the parallels between the words and actions of Mashiach and ancient Hebrew marriage custom. The question is what phase of the marriage procedures are we at today? Well we have opened the door to Mashiach thereby accepting His proposal and we have agreed to the marriage '*ketubah*' – via our observing Torah. Our groom is currently building the marriage home (John 14:2-3) and with all His groomsmen he will come to collect His bride; looking for the lighted lamps. He will then, in accordance with ancient custom, whisk His bride away (He will gather together the righteous believers who will be taken to a safe place beyond the realms of YHWH's wrath). After the wrath and the renewal of creation Mashiach's bride a.k.a. Torah keeping believers will be supernaturally transported to the Land, sprinkled with YHWH's water (bridal mikveh) and clothed in YHWH's robe of righteousness - the wedding garment, all in preparation for the wedding of the 'Lamb. Mashiach's bride has to be without spot, has to be perfect, no lesser condition is acceptable. Only YHWH's cleansing and the endowment of the fullness of His spirit can produce a bride suitable for His Son. This will be the condition of the residents in the Land in the millennium hence there is no need for separation.

Since the time of the fall YHWH has been offering restoration of the covenant relationship: He wants to live amongst humanity. Clearly the scenario presented and portrayed in the Scriptures, is one of marriage and incongruent with a temple system epitomizing separation. YHWH is an Elohim 'in love' and like any husband He wants to live with His spouse, not live in separation. Even the book of Revelation, which in effect is a book of culmination, sings from the same song sheet, as can be seen in Part 4.

No doubt those who advocate a millennial temple and the continuance of separation, with YHWH hidden in a temple room, believe in a future wedding between Mashiach and His body of believers. I have to ask these advocates when, where and how is the betrothal to take place, similarly the wedding itself?

Clifford Fearnley 2020 (Revised 2023)