



This paper is not intended to identify who the Bride of Christ is; that is another study, and neither is it my intention to unpack the Biblical ideals of marriage. This study is intended to explore the character and nature of the Bride of Christ and the condition of her heart as she prepares to meet her Bridegroom.

In this study we will look at her procession and consecration through the pattern of the Tabernacle, and how she learns through her change, to become an acceptable and sweet aroma to her God. As she stands outside the door of her soon to be house, she has gone through the trials of the age. Having been chosen since before the foundation of the world, and been marked by the blood of Christ, she now comes to the final stage. She has been washed, purified and perfected and now wears the wedding gown of righteousness. She is about to become One with her Bridegroom. Placing herself upon the worship altar, she is the culmination of the praises of God through the ages. She is the unification of the glorious illumination of every lamp that has been set alight by the saints of Christ.

As we endeavour to look into the heart of the Bride we will discover mystery as we are allowed a glimpse into the intimacy between the divine couple.

The age is drawing to an end, and we can hasten the glorious return of the Bridegroom and the heavenly feast of the marriage supper. Together with our own consecration, we reflect her heart upon the worship altar and can prepare the Bride for His return.

The raw beauty of the Tabernacle commanded by YHVH to Moses, reflects a simplicity that is so often overlooked. We have all seen the plans and the designs of artists over the years of what this simple structure looked like at its inception. This construction was made from cloth and skins, elaborately embroidered curtains, beaten gold and other metals. It was a building that no one had ever seen before and its detail could only have been seen by the eyes of Moses and those chosen to be part of its construction. Of course dimensions and materials, furnishings and craftsmanship are written in the scriptures for us. Moses is given the details on Mount Sinai to relay to the chief craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiab. But it is only through our imagination that we can perceive its simplistic grandeur.

Let us read the initial instructions in Exodus 25.

Exodus 25 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Tell the children of Israel to take an offering for Me. From every man whose heart moves him [to give willingly] you shall take My offering. 3 This is the offering you are to receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, 4 blue, purple, and scarlet fabric, fine twisted linen, goats’ *hair*, 5 rams’ skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, 6 [olive] oil for lighting, balsam for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones and setting stones for the [priest’s] ephod and for the breastpiece. 8 Have them build a sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them. 9 You shall construct it in accordance with everything that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture. AMP

What is the first thing we read? We read that offerings and all the substance of the building of the Tabernacles must be given as a response of the heart.

Some teachers teach that the Tabernacle is a shadow picture of the Bride, but what I believe YHVH is showing is a little more delicate and profound. It is the pattern of restoration. This restoration is the return of His beloved back to the garden and onward into His dwelling. The word Shekinah is often used synonymously with the glory cloud of God, but it also means ‘dwelling’. The manifestation of the Shekinah means that YHVH is dwelling with His people, and not only that; He is making a sacred space among them. The sacred space is called the Holy of Holies. The High Priest stands symbolically as YHVH’s Bride. He approaches YHVH once a year on the day of atonement.

Hebrews 9: 6 **Now when these things have been prepared in this way, the priests continually enter the outer [or first section of the] Tabernacle [that is, the Holy Place]**

performing [their ritual acts of] the divine worship, 7 but into the second [inner Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies], only the high priest *enters* [and then only] once a year, and never without [bringing a sacrifice of] blood, which he offers [as a substitutionary atonement] for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. 8 By this the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [the true Holy of Holies and the presence of God] has not yet been disclosed as long as the first *or* outer Tabernacle is still standing [that is, as long as the Levitical system of worship remains a recognised institution], 9 for this [first or outer Tabernacle] is a symbol [that is, an archetype or paradigm] for the present time.

In this passage, we see that the priests can only enter into the Holy Place, and that it is the role of the High Priest to present himself to YHVH, only when the sacrifice of atonement has been made. We also see that priests are performing acts of divine worship.

When YHVH establishes the new heaven and earth, the old Tabernacle will be replaced. There will be no need for the sacrifice of animals or for the atonement offering.

The Bride will have been cleansed and now abides in the Holy of Holies, the house of her husband. Now part of this Royal Priesthood, the King and His Queen are served in divine worship by all the saved saints and the angels. Melchizedek is the order of this Royal Priesthood. The name 'Melchizedek means 'King of Righteousness'. However, it is made up of two words. The word 'Melek' is the first part of this name, which means King and it is also the noun for 'Salt'. Let us read this passage to understand this.

Exodus 30: 22 Then the LORD said to Moses, 23 "Take the finest spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half that amount (250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, 24 500 shekels of cassiak—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin of olive oil. 25 Prepare from these a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer; it will be a sacred anointing oil.

26 Use this oil to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the Testimony, 27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, the altar of incense, 28 the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. 29 You are to consecrate them so that they will be most holy. Whatever touches them shall be holy. 30 Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them to serve Me as priests.

31 And you are to tell the Israelites, 'This will be My sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. 32 It must not be used to anoint an ordinary man, and you must not make anything like it with the same formula. It is holy, and it must be holy to you. 33

Anyone who mixes perfume like it or puts it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people.' ”

The Incense

34 The LORD also said to Moses, “Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense—in equal measures, 35 and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer, **seasoned with salt, pure and holy**. 36 Grind some of it into fine powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37 You are never to use this formula to make incense for yourselves; you shall regard it as holy to the LORD. 38 Anyone who makes something like it to enjoy its fragrance shall be cut off from his people.”

This aromatic fragrance is a set apart preparation and must only be used for the altar of incense. It can never be used for anything else. Its misuse comes with dire consequences. The separation of this fragrance tells us immediately that this is symbolic of the Bride. She is set apart and must never be given to anyone else.

Salt is not only a preserver but was a sign when making a covenant of loyalty and friendship. Yeshua in Matthew 5 referred to the people as salt. Why? Because they were people of the covenant, and as such their influence upon the world should be impactful. They were preserved because the word of God was life and it was something that should be shared with everyone.

We read in Psalm 19 the life giving properties of God’s word.

7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

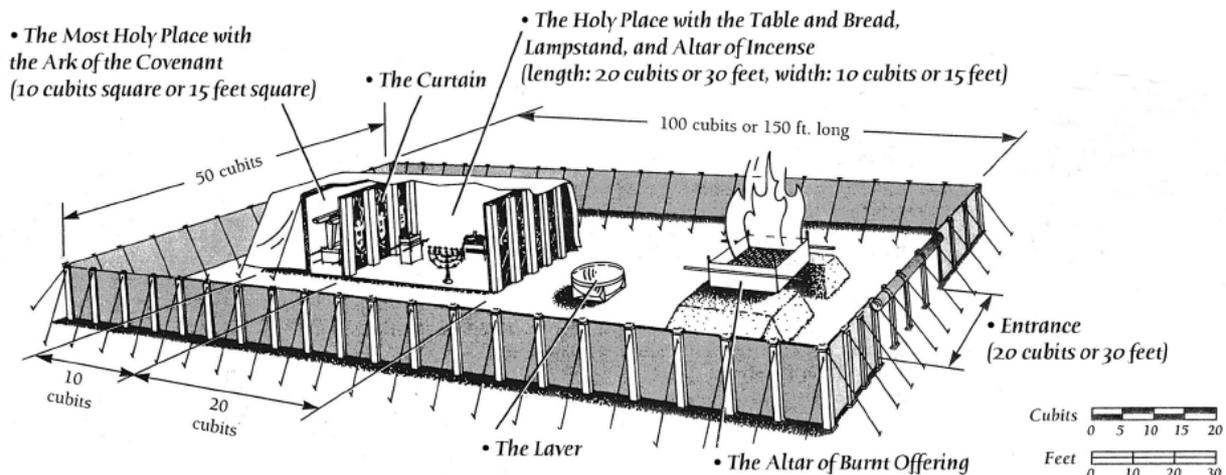
11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them there is great reward.

If we are to be as salt then we transcend the natural order. The Melek, is the highest rank above all beings and represents the alpha. The word 'zedek', means 'just', or 'righteous'.

Suddenly we see that the Bride of her Messiah can only stand with Him, when she has passed the test of being refined in righteousness. She is as His equal. Together, they make up this order and are now 'One'. She has become a new creation.

Returning to the Tabernacle model, we actually see the pattern of a path which represents the salvation of the Bride. This salvation includes her repentance and subsequent forgiveness. In addition, the route opened up for her redemption lies ahead.

The way to her husband is through sacrifice and cleansing.



source: Biblegateway

Looking at the Tabernacle outline and despite the ornate furnishings, YHVH chooses to live among His people in a simple tent. It is unlike the great palaces of Egypt. His temple is not grand like those of other pagan cultures. He lives alongside His people and though He is their God and King, the simplicity of His earthly dwelling ranks among the tents of those He has chosen. He does not live in opulence, and His dwelling reflects the generous giving of the people. YHVH takes what the best of human hands can make. But it is not just about what we can do, it's about the condition of the heart that offers what we have made. We see in its final building, that YHVH found it pleasing and thus inhabited the Tabernacle.

As we look closely we see that the Tabernacle was not very big at all. The entrance is 30 feet across. Just think of the people waiting at this entrance to have their offerings of livestock, taken by the priests. The Altar, must burn what is acceptable and the animals must be without blemish. Next we journey to the Laver bowl. It was made from the copper mirrors given by the women. Copper was used as a purifying and sterilising agent. Here, at the bowl, the priests would cleanse themselves. Only after cleansing, could the priests enter the Holy Place to service the lamp, the altar of incense, and replenish the showbread.

As the Bride makes her way through to the Holy of Holies, and having been cleansed, we see that YHVH sees her light is shining for Him and her fragrance pervades the Holy place. We must remember that she can only get this far if her offering of worship is accepted.

Looking Forward

If we think prophetically, we conclude that all things have been completed. This means therefore that the marriage of the Lamb and the Wedding supper has already taken place.

But at this present time we are living in the fore-shadow of events.

Hebrews 8:1 tells us:

Now the main point of what we have to say *is this*: we have such a High Priest [the Christ] who is seated [in the place of honor] at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty (God) in heaven, **2** a Minister (Officiating Priest) in the holy places and in the true Tabernacle, which is erected not by man, but by the Lord. **3** For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is essential for this One also to have something to offer. **4** Now if He were [still living] on earth, He would not be a priest at all, for there are priests who offer the gifts [to God] in accordance with the Law. **5 They serve as a pattern and foreshadowing of [what has its true existence and reality in] the heavenly things (sanctuary).**

Having established some kind of pattern for us to view, we must also understand that the fore-shadow falls under the rule of law and ritual. These serve, as Paul tells us, as shadow pictures of a heavenly dwelling.

The better way is that what is built is built through the writing of His covenant upon the hearts and minds of the people. YHVH found that the problem was not the covenant He made, but the hearts of the people. Thus we, through the refining process, will enter into the promise by a much better process if our hearts are pure.

Heb 8:10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
After those days, says the Lord:

I will imprint My laws upon their minds [even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding],
And engrave them upon their hearts [effecting their regeneration].
And I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.

David, Israel's first and true King, reflected the heart, that desired to worship YHVH. He was appointed the honour of presenting the plans of the first temple to His son Solomon.

1 Chronicles 28:4-12

4 However, the Lord, the God of Israel, chose me from all in my father's house to be king over Israel forever. For He has chosen Judah to be the leader; and in the house (tribe) of Judah he chose the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He was pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5 Of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. 6 He said to me, 'Solomon your son shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be a son to Me, and I will be a father to him. 7 I will establish his kingdom forever if he loyally *and* continually obeys My commandments and My ordinances, as is done today.' 8 Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek after all the commandments of the Lord your God so that you may possess the good land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons after you forever.

9 **"As for you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father [have personal knowledge of Him, be acquainted with, and understand Him; appreciate, heed, and cherish Him] and serve Him with a blameless heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and minds, and understands every intent and inclination of the thoughts.** If you seek Him [inquiring for and of Him and requiring Him as your first and vital necessity] He will let you find Him; but if you abandon (turn away from) Him, He will reject you forever. 10 Consider this carefully, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be courageous *and* strong and do it."

11 Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan for the porch *of the temple*, its buildings, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner rooms, and for the place for the [ark and its] mercy seat; 12 and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the Lord, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storerooms of the house of God and for the storerooms for the dedicated gifts *and* offerings;..

As David passes on the design for the House of YHVH to his son, He emphasises that Solomon's mind must be willing and his heart blameless.

David's heart reflected the heart of the Father. 1 Samuel 13:14. We often think that David chased or ran after God's heart, but God is saying that David's heart was like His. David's desire was to honour YHVH with the sound of string and wind instruments. He admonished worshippers to make music to the Lord, and to play the instruments he had designed. We forget that this great king of Israel was also a musician and a poet. He wrote into the psalms his deepest feelings — those that emanated from his very depths. Psalm 130:1

1. Out of the depths
I cry to You, O LORD!
2 O Lord, hear my voice;
let Your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy.
3 If You, O LORD, kept track of iniquities,
then who, O Lord, could stand?
4 But with You there is forgiveness,
so that You may be feared.

Look how he ties in the forgiveness of the Lord into this heartfelt cry. The heart of the Bride, sings to her beloved from the very depths of her soul.

Luke 6 say's v45 **The upright (honourable, intrinsically good) man out of the good treasure [stored] in his heart produces what is upright** (honourable and intrinsically good), and the evil man out of the evil storehouse brings forth that which is depraved (wicked and intrinsically evil); **for out of the abundance (overflow) of the heart his mouth speaks. AMP**

Let us lay this passage aside another well known passage in Ephesians.

5:11 Have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that is illuminated becomes a light itself. 14 So it is said:

“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to reckless indiscretion. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. **Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord**, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The worship and praise of YHVH breaks forth as the heart is filled. His adoration proceeds. The voice issues forth from a wilful decision to speak. Passing through a sound box, this larynx is both a wind and a string instrument to the Lord. The vocal cords vibrate as air passes over them, and as the heart prepares the melody, the voice responds.

So we see, how important Ephesians 5:19 is. YHVH wants to hear the song that issues from the abundance of the heart. David's heart, issued forth the abundance of what he felt for the Lord, so much so that he has filled our lives with his songs.

Building the Altar : The Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1-14.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

5 "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, **friend?**' The man was speechless.

13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

In this parable we see a clear image of the preparation of this auspicious event. The invitations are sent out, beyond those who are called to attend initially, and then we read that some of the messengers were killed. However, the invitations make us aware that the wedding feast is yet to take place. We realise that only a select few are invited to the feast, but sadly they find all the excuses not to attend. Now the invitation must go far and wide and finally, we come to the feast itself where we see a man who tries to enter and who is in unsuitable apparel.

The scenario is a reference to the house of Israel who rejects the Messiah, and thus is disqualified from attending His wedding.

Luke's account of the parable tells us that the invitation goes out to a specific group
14:21 "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'"

This is a direct reference to the scattered house of Israel who have become estranged from YHVH's house because they neglected His word. We also see that this aspect of the calling is the call to repent and return to YHVH. The way is clear, it is through Messiah Yeshua to whose wedding we are all invited, if and *only* if we have prepared.

The man who is thrown out is however, rejected because he has become too familiar and disregards the protocol of entrance. What strikes me is that the man is addressed as friend.

In the Greek we find that the word 'hetairos' Strong's 2083 is used. It means a companion (normally an imposter), posing to be a comrade but in reality has only his own interests in mind.

It is important to know that a form of the worship of YHVH can take place with insincere hearts and other motives. We see false doctrine rife in the church, and the prosperity doctrine is one that has led many people astray, seeking only personal blessings and increase. How different all of this is when compared to the heart of the Bride.

Isaiah 29:13 is cited by Yeshua in Matthew 15:8.

"These people draw near to Me with their mouths
and honor Me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from Me.
Their worship of Me is but rules taught by men.
14 Therefore I will again confound these people
with wonder upon wonder.
The wisdom of the wise will vanish,
and the intelligence of the intelligent will be hidden."

In Psalm 17:1, we read again the cry of David,

1 Hear, O LORD, my righteous plea;
listen to my cry.
Give ear to my prayer—
it comes from lips free of deceit.
2 May my vindication come from Your presence;
may Your eyes see what is right.
3 You have tried my heart;

You have visited me in the night.
You have tested me and found no evil;
I have resolved not to sin with my mouth.

Returning to the unwelcome visitor — we see that attention is immediately brought to what he is wearing. The wedding attire of the guests identify them and show us that they have prepared for celebration and that they have taken time and paid attention to the invitation requirements. We see on a spiritual aspect that they have made themselves ready and purchased new garments for the occasion.

If you have ever been to a wedding, you will understand the amount of time you will give in purchasing new clothes and making yourself respectable. You don't just grab any old cloth from the wardrobe.

A Heavenly Pattern on Earth.

YHVH has given us a pattern to follow that lays out the protocol of entrance to the wedding. This event is not external to the Kingdom of God; it is in the Kingdom and thus all who attend have made it, passed through the entrance and given of themselves. All who are in attendance are friends and family now.

How does what we have discovered reflect on the heart of the Bride?

The wedding signifies that the 'Whole House of YHVH', has been restored. On earth we see that this is the whole house of Israel.

In Jeremiah 33, we read: v10 This is what the LORD says: In this place you say is a wasteland without man or beast, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted—inhabited by neither man nor beast—**there will be heard again 11 the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of the Bride and Bridegroom, and the voices of those bringing thank offerings into the house of the LORD, saying:**

**'Give thanks to the LORD of Hosts,
for the LORD is good;
His loving devotion endures forever.'**

A Picture of the Bride

The Song of Solomon is filled with beautiful imagery of the relationship between the Bride (the beloved) and her husband (the lover).

We are first introduced to the Bride in her own words. This is such a beautiful passage that reflects her longing and impatience to be with her king.

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love is more delightful than wine.

3 The fragrance of your perfume is pleasing;
your name is like perfume poured out.
No wonder the maidens adore you.
4 Take me away with you—let us hurry!
May the king bring me to his chambers.

But v5 relays to us perhaps, a little insecurity about the Bride. Why has she been chosen when there are fairer maidens among the king's house?

5 I am dark, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

6 Do not stare because I am dark,
for the sun has gazed upon me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
they made me a keeper of the vineyards,
but my own vineyard I have neglected.

7 Tell me, O one I love,
where do you pasture your sheep?
Where do you rest them at midday?
Why should I be like a veiled woman
beside the flocks of your companions?

The one who the lover chooses is unlike other women. She is confused as to why he has picked her. She has been working in the vineyards, out in the sun and has become darkened by its rays. She has not been pampered like the other women.

The vineyard is both a physical place and also alludes to her sexuality. There is deep attraction between the couple. Her appearance to the lover proves that she is a woman of substance. Her toil in the vineyard shows us spiritually that she has been working hard in preparing herself. We read such intimate and personal words that express incredible sexuality in their overtones. The fragrances and the perfumes of the couple intermingle in the depth of their love.

The offering of incense symbolises this attraction. As the aroma rises, this sweet essence, is recognised by YHVH as His Bride comes towards Him.

4:9 You have captured my heart,
my sister, my Bride;
you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your neck.
10 How delightful is your love,
my sister, my Bride!
Your love is much better than wine,
and the fragrance of your perfume than all spices.
11 Your lips, my Bride,

drip sweetness like the honeycomb;
honey and milk are under your tongue,
and the fragrance of your garments
is like the aroma of Lebanon.

12 My sister, my Bride, you are a garden locked up,
a spring enclosed, a fountain sealed.

The Path to the Presence

The Mishkan, or the Tabernacle, is more than a gathering of priests and sacrifices surrounded by tents, canvas and elaborate furnishings. It is more than the offerings of the people. YHVH made His Tabernacle from these things, and placed an order of approach into His presence. Not only had these protocols to be followed exactly, and the Tabernacle built to precise detail; it had to be perfect for YHVH to make His place among His people. The Mishkan was a portable dwelling for Him, and His presence would be signified by the pillar of fire and the cloud of smoke that manifest among the caravan of people throughout their journey.

The word of YHVH, in His Torah, would travel with them throughout their preparation to enter the promised land. Once again the promise land signifies the place of YHVH's dwelling, where the Holy of Holies would be established.

Looking at the outline of the Tabernacle, we see that the process to the Holy of Holies is established. We begin at the entrance where the people leave their sacrifices for the priests to offer. This is their gift. We continue onward to the sacrifice and its various forms and preparations just as YHVH stipulated. We see that the priest must examine the sacrifices for defect, and so they are responsible for the acceptability of the offering. Daily cleansing and changes of garments took place throughout the day. Only when the priests were clean, having washed in the laver bowl, could they enter the Holy place, and only once a year could the high priest enter the Holy of Holies.

This process shows us the very journey of the Bride toward her groom. I will elaborate on this later. However, it is important that we remember that The High Priest stands as an intermediary between YHVH and the people. The High Priest, is also the anointer of kings, and the one who will perform the royal wedding. These are the highest of honours.

But ultimately, the actions of the priests and the quality of the sacrifice are his responsibility.

We read so many times, throughout the scriptures of how the temple priests failed in their duties in observing the priestly laws, and how they did not treat the offerings with respect.

The Role of the Priest

We read in 1 Samuel, a very poignant event that ultimately leads to some drastic changes. Eli was the high priest for forty years, He was also the second to last judge of Israel. He was preceded by Samuel who became the last judge before the period of the kings.

Eli, means 'My God' or even 'Yah is High'. Despite warning his sons of their wickedness and abuse of their roles as priests, Eli allowed them to continue in their duties. His sons Hophni and Phinehas, did not share in their father's righteous ways and continued to sleep with the temple women and take from the offerings. The result was that YHVH would curse the family and not allow any one of Eli's descendants to reach old age. Hophni and Phinehas subsequently died in a battle between the Israelites and Philistines. On hearing the news of his sons' death, Eli died, falling off a chair and breaking his neck. 1 Samuel 4:18.

YHVH now placed Samuel in the position of High Priest. Having been consecrated by his mother Hannah from birth, Samuel would be the one to anoint the first king of Israel, and then David. Samuel was an anointer of kings.

The story of Samuel and Eli shows us through much tragedy, that YHVH can be displeased with the actions of those who are supposed to be dedicated to His service. He will not accept the unholy to present to Him that which is holy.

This episode is to much of a degree reflected in the modern church. The profane and the holy are often placed together. The lines between the profane and holy are very much blurred. The offerings of the people are not quality controlled. Anything seems to be tolerated and acceptable. Our entrance — coming into the presence of God, if He is indeed present, is over familiar and His grace is often abused and misunderstood.

The adage of 'come as you are', is simply an excuse that encourages people not to bother. 'God doesn't mind - He loves you just as you are'. This applies to the sinner who having received God's amazing grace, is forgiven. Those who propagate the 'come as you are', message fail to understand that a condition of change must be pursued. If we were indeed all right, as we are, then God would not be in the process of changing us. It's not complicated.

When the sacrifice has a defect, then it simply isn't accepted. We may argue that none of that matters. Yeshua said that when two or more of us gather in His name, that HE is in the midst of us. But there is a whole load of condition involved in Him being within our midst.

He does not stand in the presence of sin and wickedness. He does not stand in the atmosphere of insincerity, pride, and familiarity. He does not stand in the presence of unforgiven sin. Yes, when all of these are present in the offering, how can it all be acceptable to God. If He were to accept it, then we can only conclude that YHVH is insincere and goes against His own word.

We conclude, therefore, that the offering of thanksgiving, consecration and sacrifice is only acceptable once it meets a string of criteria. The heart of the Bride seeks to honour the rules, not digress from them or change them.

How can she say that she loves her God and King so much and dishonour his very word? She can't!

Clean garments, the robes of righteousness adorn her. Having been prepared, she stands ready to enter the most sacred of places. There is no other place in heaven or on earth. She is preoccupied in her preparedness and so should her priestly attendants be.

The sublime aspect of her bridal gown is that it represents garments that are stained with the blood of the lamb. But her garments aren't scarlet, they are washed as white as snow. This is her identifier. However, she has reached this place through great trial, and tribulation — having gone through a world of wickedness, judged by YHVH himself.

Isaiah 1: 16 "Wash and cleanse yourselves.
Remove your evil deeds from My sight.
Stop doing evil!
17 Learn to do right;
seek justice and correct the oppressor.
Defend the fatherless
and plead the case of the widow."
18 "Come now, let us reason together,"
says the LORD.
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they will be as white as snow;
though they are as red as crimson,
they will become like wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the best of the land.
20 But if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword."

The greater part of this passage speaks of how YHVH finds offerings offered through wickedness detestable.

Isaiah 1: 10 Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom;
listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!
11 "What good to Me is your multitude of sacrifices?"
says the LORD.
"I am full from the burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed cattle;

I take no delight in the blood of bulls
and lambs and goats.

12 When you come to appear before Me,
who has required this of you—
this trampling of My courts?

13 Bring your worthless offerings no more;
your incense is detestable to Me—
your New Moons, Sabbaths, and convocations.

I cannot endure iniquity
in a solemn assembly.

14 I hate your New Moons
and your appointed feasts.

They have become a burden to Me;
I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide My eyes from you;
even though you multiply your prayers,
I will not listen.

Your hands are covered with blood...

Let us not fool ourselves; no amount of offering given in sinfulness will be acceptable. If it is, then YHVH has changed the rules.

It is only in the atoning blood of Messiah, shed for the remission of sin, that we can offer such acceptable sacrifices. However, they must be offered by one who lives a righteous life, according to God's word, and not according to their own perception of His laws.

We must, however, be forever grateful to the Most High, for His forgiveness and mercy, which allows, after genuine repentance, 'teshuvah', to approach the throne of grace.

YHVH wants us all to dwell within His presence, but He wants us all to reflect the image of the union of the Bride and her king.

Who can enter?

Failure to prepare and consecrate one's life, remember this life, your life, which was bought at such a great price, leads us down a very slippery path.

Many believers today, argue that we don't have to obey the commands of God.

Disobeying God's commands 'aren't that bad, we only have to repent,' may be the argument. However, Yeshua reiterated the Royal command:

Matt 22:36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**

Loving the Lord our God in this way, means we observe all His commands. Is it legalistic to suggest that most Christians fail in this at their ignorance or even in their observance of the Sabbath day for instance, which brings a whole load of trouble if neglected. It is the fourth commandment of God, is it not? Has YHVH changed His mind once again?

Leviticus 26 is a very powerful chapter that highlights YHVH’s anger toward wickedness. ‘Why does such a loving God act in this way?’ some may ask.

Its passage is spoken in the first person of YHVH. What is highlighted is the blessings of obedience and the punishment upon disobedience. Further more, YHVH acts to such a degree because He knows how great was the price He paid for the ransom.

Yeshua atoned for more than we can imagine. His payment exceeded the redemption price.

We read in Leviticus again:

27:1 The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate a person to the Lord by giving the equivalent value, 3 set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel; 4 for a female, set her value at thirty shekels; 5 for a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels; 6 for a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels of silver and that of a female at three shekels of silver; 7 for a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels and of a female at ten shekels. 8 If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, the person being dedicated is to be presented to the priest, who will set the value according to what the one making the vow can afford.

As we read on we also see the redemption price for animals, land and homes, which may be dedicated to the Lord.

Looking closely we see that every thing and every person has a separate price because they are valued differently.

This is because each person was apportioned worth, according to their role within the community of the people. Younger men, for example, could serve in the military, and thus their value was greater; older men can contribute in providing for the community in other ways and in service for the temple too.

In Yeshua's atonement, and having paid the ransom for us all, we see how much a greater price He paid for everyone. The demand upon Him was His own Life.

The death of Yeshua, allows His Bride to be forgiven for adultery. She is free to marry again. What do the scriptures say?

Romans 7:1 Do you not know, brothers (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? 2 For instance, a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. **But if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law and is not an adulteress, even if she marries another man.**

In this relationship of Christ and His Bride, we see a mystery. Yeshua, never changed His Bride. He will always love the one He has chosen. The Bride He marries will be the Bride He married in the first place. So great a love has He for her.

Despite her infidelities and her love for others, He is still loyal to her. He won't break the covenant He made with her since the beginning of time, though she has breached it many times. He will do all to save and redeem her. Having done this, she will be changed into a new creation that will conform to the image of her King. So drastic will this phenomenal change be that She will become one with Him and equal in power and priestly status. She becomes the Royal Priesthood and the Holy Nation first prophesied in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 19:5

Now if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you will be My treasured possession out of all the nations — for the whole earth is Mine.

Exodus 19:6

And unto Me you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Leviticus 20: 7 Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. 8 And you shall keep My statutes and practice them. I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

As we continue in our approach to the Holy Place, remember, this is the place outside the Holy of Holies — we remind ourselves that this place can only be accessed once the priest has been cleansed from his daily duties.

These words in psalm 24 indicate to us clearly on the conditions of entry to the Holy Place.

1 The earth *is* the Lord's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.

2 For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.
3 **Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who may stand in His holy place?**
4 **He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.**
5 **He shall receive blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.**
6 **This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face. *Selah***
7 Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
8 *Who is this King of glory?*
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
10 *Who is this King of glory?*
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory. *Selah*

Straight away we read that only those with clean hands and pure heart can enter into the Holy Place. Furthermore we read that those who seek the Lord are called the 'generation of Jacob'.

The generation of Jacob can only refer to the 'Whole unified house of Jacob'. This is reference to Israel, as the Bride.

The psalm continues in its imagery of the temple and the great entrance of the Ark and YHVH's presence amongst His people.

The acceptable offering

Romans 12

1 Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you]. AMP

As YHVH chose Israel from among the nations to be His own treasured possession, we are admonished in this verse to live a holy and separate life. Sadly, the liberal and antichrist spirit within the church, clearly accepts any form of life and it need not be holy. So, in blunt terms, a person who profanes God's holiness cannot offer a holy sacrifice or in other words, an unholy sacrifice is not holy or pleasing to God.

Believers cannot live one life for God and live in the world. They must be separate from the world.

In the Garden of Eden YHVH sacrificed a pure and perfect lamb, to cover the sins of the humans. Having sinned and been made aware of their shame, they grabbed a few leaves and tried to cover themselves. They believed that this simple covering would do the job, — perhaps God wouldn't notice. In this act we see that we too can believe that we can cover our sin, ourselves. But such was the greatness of the sin enacted against God, that He saw there was only one thing that could solve the problem. He did not want to destroy the people He had made in His image — He loved them, and so He shed the blood of an innocent and perfect animal, the lamb of God.

The scriptures tell us: 1 Peter 17 Since you call on a Father who judges each one's work impartially, conduct yourselves in reverent fear during your stay as foreigners. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life you inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot. **20 He was known before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in the last times for your sake.**

Rev 13: 7 Then the beast was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them, and it was given authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. 8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship the beast—**all whose names have not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb who was slain.**

Before we can enter into the courts of praise, we must acknowledge our own condition before the Most High, perfect and pure is He.

This is part of the preparation process. Consecration does not happen in the moment. It takes time and is meticulous in its processings. In this we see that only the 'Holy' can present that which is 'Holy'.

Practical preparations make sure that both our moral and spiritual preoccupations seek the Lord at all times. We do not seek to do our own thing or presume the things that God may ask of us.

The Bride of Christ is being prepared by her assistants. The priests, who are consecrated for this task have themselves gone through a process of purification. Having done their task, the Bride is now able to stand in the Holy Place; this is the final check before the door is opened for her to enter into her husband's house.

We should be beginning to see that the process of purification for the Bride is extensive and rigorous. Just as Moses was given the Tabernacle to build, meticulously and according to the pattern, so must the process be for the Bride.

But has God changed the rules and did the husband's death, Yeshua upon the cross, reduce the entry qualifications to the Kingdom? Has grace covered the approach to the most holy place? Grace allows us to put everything right before the time of judgment. Grace gives us checking points along the way. So we can argue that there is a covering for iniquity, but sin should not prevail.

If we look at the stipulations of following our Master Yeshua, we see that the bar is raised. Is this statement too rigid, or too fundamental for today's modern and liberal Christian mind?

We could argue that a liberal form of the worshipping life, may well see us to the goal, but that's like saying 'we will observe God's law but we will change a few things along the way to suit us'. Imagine if the Israelites knew that they were going to a particular geographical point on the earth and that on foot it might take them three weeks to walk, and then someone from the future with a fleet of buses turns up and offers them a ride that would take 3 days.

They may well take up the offer but what would they have learned along the way? The journey was precisely the point.

The journey therefore toward the Tabernacle *is precisely the point*. You can't skip the entrance, the fire and the water, to stand in the Holy Place.

The Practical Preparations.

When we approach God with reverence and fear, we do so because we know that He is the Sovereign King and creator of the universe. He has the power to judge, to give and to take away. David wrote that we are but vapour.

Psalm 144:4 Man is like a breath;
His days are like a passing shadow. NKJ

James echoes the same words

4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away NKJ

We must realise that not anything is acceptable upon the altar. The acceptable gift is given knowing our position with God, knowing what He desires and that what is given is offered with repentance, thanksgiving and sacrifice. All of these things are done because we love Him and do not want him to be displeased.

Once again in the story of Samuel, we recount the episode when the ark is captured by the Philistines. The wife of Phinehas, son of Eli, gave birth to a son whom she named 'Icabod'. 1 Samuel 4:21.

Ichabod mean's 'inglorious,' 'no glory'. His mother named him so because YHVH had left His house, or Israel. Eli and his sons were to blame.

Our offering of worship must never be given without thought — it cannot be a last minute gift. When we apply our heart to what we are going to bring to our God, we are making practical and spiritual preparations. Don't confuse these with religious tasks. Our gatherings should be a place where people have come prepared, not a place to prepare. Just think of our preparations again when we go to a family wedding.

The Worship Altar is the Heart of the Bride.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to seek those who worship in spirit and truth. These are those who know what the worship of God is and the relationship between Him and His Bride. The refinement of the Bride, standing in the Holy Place, proves that His work has not been void. She, now having been refined throughout the age, through trial and fire, imbues the most Holy Place with her perfume. How YHVH longs to see her standing there.

The worship altar defines the offering. It is the Heart of the Bride singing to her husband, and it is more than this. It is the couple in intimate embrace.

We are not told how to worship God, apart from in 'Spirit' and 'Truth', John 4:24. We also love Him by obeying His commands and laws. Worship is defined as:

'the act of showing respect and love for a god especially by praying with other people who believe in the same god : the act of worshipping God or a god (source Britannica)

Our focus should lie upon the first part of that definition.

Merriams-Webster's dictionary defines it thus:

Merriam-Webster's definition,

*1 chiefly British : a person of importance — used as a title for various officials (as magistrates and some mayors) 2 : reverence offered [to] a divine being or supernatural power; also : an act of expressing such reverence 3 : a form of religious practice with its creed and ritual 4 : **extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem v. 1 : to honor or reverence as a divine being or supernatural power 2 : to regard with great or extravagant respect,***

honor, or devotion intransitive senses : to perform or take part in worship or an act of worship.

Both these definitions define worship as a practice that can be given to anything or anyone. There has to be a definition of the worship of YHVH that stands alone.

We can move closer to this definition by defining who can give worship to YHVH.

The Greek word 'proskuneo', Strongs 4352, defines worship as an action, in which the person prostrates oneself, and moves towards, touches or kisses the hand of, or the ground in front of, the one they are giving adoration too.

It is considered to be an act of obeisance between the Bride and Christ. Note that this action requires the movement of someone toward another person. However, this is still not definitive. It can, once again, be the act of obeisance to anything or anyone who is considered worthy of worship by an individual or church, in its broadest term.

In the Hebrew, the word 'shachah' Strongs 7812, is the equivalent term.

It would therefore seem, as far as I am aware, that there is no definitive term in the human language that defines worship purely to YHVH. Perhaps it cannot be defined in words. Perhaps it can only be captured and expressed by the interaction of the divine in a sacred space.

I propose that this interaction is found when the Bride in her divine state, stands in the same place, the sacred space as her divine King. At this moment we witness the transfer of the offering from hand to hand, just as the wedding couples hands touch each other at the transfer of the rings. Note that this offering is not one that is left to be picked up, or need pass through some special filter.

This is the offering of the Bride of Christ, and she rejoices that the day has finally come. It is such a moment of romance as she declares 'I am my beloved's and My beloved is mine'.

We are reminded at this moment of these words spoken by Paul an Apostle of Christ:

Ephesians 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. 4 For He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence. In love 5He predestined us for adoption as His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the Beloved One. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And He has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together in Christ.

In this wonderful passage, it puts into context the bridal aspect - her blessings and reward, her predestination and the fulfilling of Christ's words. All things have now come to pass. The bridal offering is herself. This final moment sees the offering, fulfil its journey through the gates of praise and thanksgiving, the courtyard of the Tabernacle, the sacrifices and the purification rites, the priestly ministry in the Holy Place through the cloud of incense into the door of the bridal home.

To understand worship and the rites of entry for the Bride, we need to revisit any form of worship which diverts our attention away from the enormity and responsibility of this glorious and divine mission. We cannot offer our worshipful sacrifice to any other god, idol or celebrity, that detracts us from our absolute devotion and hope.

There is a song that begins:

As I come into your presence
Passed the gates of praise
Into your sanctuary
Till we're standing face to face
I look upon your countenance
I see the fullness of your grace
And I can only bow down and say.

You are awesome in this place mighty God,
You are awesome in this place Abba Father,
You are worthy of all our praise
To you our lives we raise
You are awesome in this place mighty God

These words remind me of the moment when YHVH stands over the couple to bless the wedding of His children.

This should be the longing of every worshipper and for every child of God to seek the position of the Bride. In the meantime, we as priests should pursue and maintain the holiness of the matter. When the Bride has made herself ready and she is seen as spotless and refined, our Messiah will return for her.

The worship altar, is the heart of the Bride that seeks to please her husband and ask for nothing in return. On a deeper level, in her maturity she also knows that the only thing she can give him is herself. The relationship is purely unconditional.

In the modern church practice of worship, and that includes the way we each relate to the Father, we find ourselves asking for so many things. We pray for health and family concerns, our work and relationships and many other things that pertain to the human heart and condition. We have to be careful though in all of this asking. Our first focus must always be on the kingdom of God and how we are growing in Him. Are we truly

being disciplined and carrying our own cross and living as Christ showed us, or are we more concerned about our own needs and the blessings we seek for a better life here on earth? As we are disciplined we are in the process of conforming to the image of Christ. We are not to be conformed to the image of the world. It is in this aspect that we are viewed when we stand before Him.

In our own worshipping experience we seek to be in the Holy Place with our Lord. We want to be where He is. But it is only through refinement - with a pure heart and clean hands, and with complete sacrifice that we can. Nothing of this world can enter the Holy Place, only that which is representative of Him.

Standing at the cross does not qualify us to enter into such a Holy Place. The way through the cross and into the kingdom of God is a narrow path.

We cannot expect God to receive our sacrifices if we are in an unholy state or if they are given in ignorance. But again, grace is at work, allowing us to re-process.

In the book of Exodus, we read how the people forced Aaron to build for them an idol for them to worship. We also understand that a mixed multitude, who were not Israelite left Egypt with the caravan of Moses.

The people did not know how to worship YHVH properly and thus created for themselves an image to worship. They turned to ways they knew how. They declared that the golden cow, represented Him. However, they had not received the commandments yet. We can ascertain that in the mix of people there were those who saw their form of cultic worship as the proper and acceptable way. We can also see that the people's lack of patience got the better of them. YHVH's response was to eliminate those, who He knew, would not want to worship Him in accordance with His laws.

The word of the Lord would take time to settle upon the hearts of the people. Their rejection and fear of entering the land Joshua and Caleb so fervently believed they could walk into, proved that their hearts were not ready to walk in the prescribed way. Their relationship with the God of Israel, had to be affirmed. This took forty years to accomplish and even then, as we read in Deuteronomy 29, just as they were about to enter the land, prophesied so long ago, YHVH gives them the chance to consider their hearts and agree to sign the covenant that would guarantee His divine presence among them and their survival in the promised land.

As we have travelled through the ages, it is clear that we have assimilated our own ways with the prescribed ways of God. It is reflected in the practical working out of the way we worship today. But the Lord is changing hearts.

Observing the practicalities.

I have been a worship leader for twenty-six years. I was brought up a Catholic and have seen other forms of worship expressed. From what seemed the calm and sedately way, more meditative and reverent, I transitioned into something that reflected more of the pop culture of the world - loud, dark and chaotic, flashing lights and smoke machines - temples of darkness when light should emanate from everywhere and not just the stage.

The latter is generally presented in this darkened space because it draws the people to light of the stage. Predominantly, the worship band is youthful and the presentation akin to a pop concert. I am not saying anything new, and I am not negating the fact that many believers who attend such meetings have a genuine desire to know God. I am sharing my own experience.

What I have shared is a contrast of how we express our own traditions when it comes to deliverance of worship.

Worship is ministry to God. It is not the other way around. We should not offer worship, hoping for a blessing. The mature offering gives worship through the death of the person, through undying love and adoration. But it also knows that YHVH will release His blessings if He sees that our attention and focus is upon Him and not how we feel.

There is no doubt, that there is a reward for us but it comes at a price. Our worship is prescribed. It must come through a pure heart for Him, not a selfish one. God is not a genie out of a bottle who is there to attend to our every whim.

Of course He wants to give us everything we need, but our reward comes through obedience and the knowledge of Him. This is the 'Ask, Seek and Knock' process. This saying not only relates to knowing Jesus, but to the knowledge of Him, that is knowing Him intimately not knowing *of* Him.

The door is only opened if He sees that we know Him. Our familiarity and ignorance will therefore not gain us entry into His house.

Discipleship is what we are called to do and to be in. In this we remain in Christ and we bear fruit. I am reminded of the teaching of the Vine.

John 15. 5 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He **cuts off** every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he **prunes** so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 **You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.** 4 **Remain in me, as I also remain in you.** No branch can bear fruit by itself; **it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."**

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. **If you remain in me and I in you,** you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you **do not remain in me,** you are like

a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

In this passage we are told that there will be a great pruning that will come upon the branches who bear no fruit. A mature plant begins to bear fruit, only by what it has been fed upon, and the conditions in which it has grown. Depending on those conditions the fruit will be good or bad. The good tree will produce good fruit and the bad, bad fruit. Stands to reason. We are also told that Yeshua has made us clean because He has spoken the word to us. That word is the seed that can grow into something good and beautiful. We see this reiterated in the parable of the seed. In that parable, we are told that the seed must die before it can produce. In another caveat to Yeshua's word in John 15, we are told also, that we can do nothing unless we remain in Him, and He in us.

It is therefore the truth, that conditions apply to our union with Him. We do not make the law or argue with the conditions we must meet to enter the kingdom. If we find contest or disagreement with the teachings of our Master, then we contend with the laws of God and we are in conflict with the understanding of the truth.

We therefore have to bring ourselves into line with Him.

2 Chronicles 7:14

12 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and [e]My eyes and [f]My heart will be there perpetually.

This passage refers to the dedication of Solomon's temple. It was built in accordance with pattern given to his father David. Having built the temple to the prescribed pattern, YHVH blessed it, and inhabited it, because it was just so. He also did this with a proviso; the people must '*humble*' themselves, '*pray*' to Him, '*seek*', His face, and '*repent*' - turn from their wickedness.

Refusing to do any of this will withhold His forgiveness and blessing. Designing any way that does not fit the pattern is familiarity and pride.

Throughout time there has always been a remnant that seeks the heart of the Father and to the calling forth — the final preparation of the Bride and the return of her King.

The Worship Altar

I would like to share with you a dream the Lord gave me when I first came to believe. I was a baby in the Lord, but eager to know and serve Him. In the dream I was standing at ground level looking toward a glass building, five levels high. There were three sections. The middle section, five levels high, was the largest and the left and right sections were about equal proportions.

Suddenly, I was taken above the building and was able to look down upon it. The building was the shape of a fish, similar to that which was used by the early church, to identify places of worship. The tail of the fish, the two fins, were the entrance to the building, and believers came from all over the world. The middle section were areas of fellowship and learning, rooms of discipling. The head was for worship. Each level was a high level of attainment. Worship came from the head of the fish, day and night.

This dream was given to me twenty-six years ago, and only now I have come to realise its true meaning. In the days to come this building will be built. Whether it will be built as I was shown it and in one spot, or it will be representative of many layers coming together in other places. Either way, this building represents the place of a temple and the gathering of a worshipping community where the word of the Lord, the Torah is central. The people will grow as they are discipled and they will attain higher levels of understanding and will mature just as the word declares.

The true heart of worship reflects the heart song of the Bride, and the worship altar is the Holy place. She will do anything and find no excuse to be where her King is. The pursuit will demand her life.

During the time of Tabernacles in this year 2022, the Lord reminded me of this dream. It is the reason for this word.

I believe, in my limited understanding, that I must step out and begin to build this place. I know that this dream will have been given to others, and perhaps you as the reader, will feel some resonance with what I have shared. I also know that it will not be down to any one person. The worshipping body of Messiah will build and give to its realisation, just as the people gave from their hearts to build the Tabernacle shown to Moses.

I have only touched in brief number of areas, which I am sure many people may find difficult to reconcile. I pray that the message will encourage you to seek the Lord further in its understand, just as I will continue to do. The work of dedication has already begun. The Lord is calling out His workers. The Lord has shown me that this is a time for asking and for seeking.

In practicality, I am stepping out with my brothers to build a physical worship altar that reflects the heart of the Bride. Our goal is to call the people to the places where the Lord will have us go, as this movable Tabernacle. We have been given a mandate to gather the

people so that YHVH's house may be full. It is a time for a new thing and to return to the ancient and prescribed way.

As believers in the 21st century, we still look, or should look to the ancient paths. We must not be so arrogant as to perceive that our ways are new and better. If we are in Christ then the process of refinement also shows us that our ways are not new at all, but are being refined.

So let us move forward and build and gather this house together.

Isaiah 43

18 "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

19 See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

20 The wild animals honor me,
the jackals and the owls,

because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,

to give drink to my people, my chosen,

21 the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.

Let it be so.

Shalom

Grant Marshall

