

Harris Happenings

April 2018





For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep *in* Jesus will God bring with him.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night...

Greetings from Kenya! We would like to take this time to share a brief update with you about how the Lord has been working in and through our lives lately. And we

want to express our deepest gratitude for the part you play in our lives and the ministry here, helping to make it possible for us to even be here. Thank you for all your prayers, encouragement, and support. We appreciate you, and all that you do...and we thank God for giving us you!

The month of April has been one FULL of various celebrations! There have been bridal celebrations, baby celebrations, birthdays, and of course the greatest cause of all to celebrate - the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

*"Spring has Sprung" and with it, the baby boom has begun! Several friends' families have been blessed with babies. We are always excited about the joy and growth that new life brings, and it is especially sweet to see it in the face of a newborn baby and the family who has been blessed by it.

*We celebrate 3 birthdays for the Harris Household in the month of April (Rachel, Ben, and myself).

*We celebrated a special Resurrection Sunday; beginning with our annual early morning "Sunrise Service" among our neighbors in the compound. It was a small, simple service with a few songs, the reading of the story from Scripture, and a short Gospel message. We then went to church for a special Easter service at our local church. We are so blessed by the way our church really seeks to do something special to celebrate both the birth and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! They all pitch in to do different parts in the service and the preparations for the meal we share together as a church afterwards.

*And this year we had a unique and very special opportunity to be involved in the wedding of some very dear friends of our family. Mike and Allison have been long time friends of our family-we have probably known them since about the beginning of our time here in Kenya. They have dated on and off for some time, and have learned a lot about themselves, one another, and the Lord in the process. It is really and truly only of the Lord, that they are now able to be joined together in holy matrimony. What an incredible testimony to God's faithfulness and unfailing love their marriage is to those who know them! Praise Him Who is Faithful and True!

This was a great opportunity for us to all get dressed up as a family and to take some photos. This time also served as a great opening in opportunities for conversation and a teaching tool with our children, and a good reminder for us all...are we ready?

Marriage is such a beautiful picture of Christ and the church.

While the wedding we attended was a mix between African and American traditions and customs, I am aware that there are various different traditions and customs across the globe that are celebrated at such a special time. One of my favorite ones to see and study would be that of Jewish culture and traditions, because it has held so much meaning to the teachings of Christ. I could never claim to even come close to being some sort of Jewish scholar, but I would love to highlight a few things that look like a "type and shadow" of Jesus and His church from the Hebrew wedding traditions.

*I took this from a separate link that someone else had written as a short summary of some of the symbolisms:

Shiddukhin – The selection of the bride: In the old days, the father chose the bride. God the Father chose the people that would accept His Son. They are the [Bride of Christ](#).

Ephsians 1:4-5: Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.

Mohar – The bride price: The groom pays a price for his true love. She has great value to him. Jesus paid the ultimate price for His Bride (the Church). He died for her!

1 Peter 1:18-19: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from our aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” I Corinthians 6:10-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

Ketubah – The Engagement: The engagement was so binding that it took a religious divorce to end it. Only the groom could do this. What Takes Place During the Engagement: 1.The Ketubah (marriage contract) is presented by the groom to the bride: This contract contains all of the groom’s promises to her. She holds this dear in her heart. Jesus made a covenant (contract) with His Bride. He sealed the contract with His own blood! The word of God tells of the promises that the Bride of Christ can claim as hers! 2.The Bride’s Consent is given: The marriage contract is entered into by both groom and bride. She only has to accept Him as Her groom. The Bride of Christ accepts Him as their Lord, Savior and Husband. We happily agree to the marriage contract with Jesus! 3.The Cup of the Covenant: A cup of wine is shared to seal the marriage covenant. The next cup of wine will be shared at the Marriage Ceremony. Jesus drank a cup of wine with His disciples at the Last Supper. He was sealing His marriage covenant with His Bride. He said He would not drink of the cup again until He was reunited with us! Matthew 26:29: Jesus said, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.

4. Matan – Bridal Gift: The groom has to go away to prepare their new home together. He gives his betrothed a valuable gift to show her how much he loves her. This gift can remind the bride-to-be of how much her future husband loves her and that he WILL return for her. The Bride of Christ is given many gifts by Jesus! The gift of eternal salvation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and many more!

5. Mikveh – Ritual Immersion: Both the groom and the bride went through an immersion in water that signified spiritual cleansing. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and then His ministry became official. His bride follows Him in

baptism to testify to the world of her death to sin and that she has been reborn in Jesus!

6. Departure of the Groom: The groom leaves His Bride-to-Be and goes to prepare a place for her at His father's house. No one knows when He will return for his bride except the groom's father. Jesus left us and went to heaven to prepare a place for us there. He said no one knew the day or hour of His return except the Father.

Matthew 9:15: Jesus said, "Can the friends of the Bridegroom mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." John 14:2: "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2-3: Jesus said "In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

7. The Bride Waits for the Groom's Return: While the bridegroom was preparing the wedding chamber, the bride was considered to be consecrated, set apart or "bought with a price." If she went out, she would wear a veil so others would know she was betrothed. During this time, she prepared herself for the marriage. She prepares her wedding clothes and other things she will need for her marriage. She wouldn't know when her groom would come for her, so she always had to be ready. Since bridegrooms typically came for their brides in the middle of the night, to "steal them away"(the groom would often come like a thief in the night, often around the midnight hour), the bride would have to have her lamp and her belongings ready at all times. She waits for her true love, pines for him and remains faithful.

The Bride of Christ waits for Jesus to come for her in the clouds! She adorns herself with good deeds and faithfulness to Him. She loves Him and waits eagerly for His return!

Such a great reminder for us to be ready...and to move us with compassion and motivate us to share with those around us who still may not yet be ready.

"Therefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:18