

The Second Most Beautiful Wedding

Recently, I had the pleasure of officiating at one of the most beautiful marriage ceremonies that I have been blessed to attend. I say one of because, clearly, my marriage was the most beautiful ceremony ever (yes, my wife reads my blogs).

The reason that this ceremony was beautiful wasn't because of the bride's dress, although it was very pretty. It wasn't because of the bride herself, although she looked amazing. It wasn't because of the beautiful chuppah (Marriage Canopy) arrayed with flowers, although the chuppah was picture perfect.

In order for you to understand why I consider this particular wedding so beautiful, you have to know a little about the bride and groom. When I first met the bride, she had just walked into Yeshua's loving arms from a life of bondage and addictions most believers could never begin to relate to. My first interactions with the groom were through the bars of his prison cell where he was gathering every Shabbat with a group of dedicated believers.

It has been years since I first met the bride and groom and I have watched them grow in their faith and in their walks with G-D. To say that there were times when both of them stumbled and fell would honestly be an understatement. However, they both continued to stand back up, and allow G-D to brush them off so they could return to the race they were running.

Because of their collective and individual pasts, the years before their wedding ceremony were difficult and filled with many opportunities for them to blame G-D or G-D's people for all of the speedbumps and detours that were the result of their bad choices—both before and after coming to faith. Yet

somehow, they were able to walk out of the filthy garbage dump of their past under their glorious chuppah, a symbolic representation of the pristine home prepared for them.

As they stood under the chuppah, I recited the Sheva Brachot (Seven Blessings), which speak of the entirety of G-D's creative work, from the Garden of Eden until the World to Come. I realized that in front of my eyes I was seeing the results of a creative miracle just as powerful as when G-D said, "Let there be light." How beautiful it was that these words proclaiming G-D's creation were now being spoken over this special bride and groom who had so miraculously become new creations.

To me, this wedding was so powerfully beautiful because the groom and the bride were both such broken people whom G-D had restored. Two people who continued to walk towards G-D together, even though it seemed that with every step a new crisis arose, a new battle began and a new mountain stood in front of them.

Yet, here they were standing together as new creations, who, just like Adam and Eve, were placed into a beautiful home prepared for them by their Father. The beauty of their wedding was not found in the beautiful dresses and suits, or the flowers and decorations. The beauty of their wedding was far beyond the beauty of this world. The beauty of their wedding reached directly into the throne room of heaven.

☒ As I watched the groom stand with tears in his eyes, and as I watched the bride circle him with tears in her eyes, I saw the glory of G-D's creative work, and even if it was only in my mind, I heard the voice of the Father of the groom and the Father of the bride saying, "These are My beloved children in whom I am well pleased."

I may be wrong, but I believe this wedding will remain in my mind the second most beautiful wedding, until the day of the

final wedding when the Bride stands under the Chuppah with Yeshua.

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Eric Tokajer is the author of "Overcoming Fearlessness," "What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?," "With Me in Paradise," "Transient Singularity," "OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry," "#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer," "Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians" and "Galatians in Context."