

## Jewish Wedding Ceremonies

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As a contributor to [www.bridalblog.info](http://www.bridalblog.info), there are frequent questions that arise by people attending weddings, not just planning them. Often times, people are a bit nervous when they go to a wedding ceremony that is of a different faith than their own. To that end, I have contracted with [www.bridalblog.info](http://www.bridalblog.info) to do a series of articles discussing what guests can expect when attending wedding ceremonies of various faiths.

Although there are many similarities between Jewish and traditional Christian ceremonies, there are some important differences. These differences need to be acknowledged, appreciated, and embraced by those planning and attending a Jewish wedding ceremony.

When looking at the setting of a Jewish ceremony, one will notice an arch over the place where the bride and groom stand. This arch is known as a "chuppa." There are several meanings of this object. A chuppa symbolizes the home the new couple will soon share, the new life the bride and groom will share, and the consummation of marriage. Some brides and grooms chose to have people hold up a chuppa. In this situation, the chuppa symbolizes a life supported by people rather than material things.

Before a Jewish wedding ceremony, the groom signs a Ketubah. It is a contract of sorts signed by the groom and witnessed by two Jewish males who are not related to the groom. This tradition began as an attempt to protect the rights of Jewish women. The contract states the responsibilities the groom has towards the bride in regards to the marriage itself as well as death and divorce. The Ketubah is presented to the bride during the ceremony.

During the Jewish wedding ceremony, the bride and groom drink from the same cup, as is done by many Christians during a wedding communion. In the Jewish tradition, the groom then breaks the glass. Again, there are several meanings behind this custom. The action reminds the bride and groom to remember the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple even in times of joy. In addition, breaking the glass demonstrates that the union of the bride and groom is unique, as is the glass that is broken and never used again. Finally, the sound of the breakage is intended to ward off evil spirits.

Another tradition during the Jewish wedding ceremony is known as the seven wedding blessings. At this point in the ceremony, the bride walks around the groom seven times as prayers are being said.

A final Jewish wedding custom is shouting "Mazel tov" at the end of the ceremony. Perhaps the most commonly known tradition, it could be the most fun. It involves not only the wedding party, but the guests, too. It is almost a cathartic moment for everyone. The ceremony is over; let the party begin!

Pepper Montero

### Short note about the author

Pepper Montero and her husband run a wedding coordination business in the Upstate of South Carolina. They have been coordinating weddings for the last two years.

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Author: Pepper Montero

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