



¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (Matt 22:11-12)

¹ And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach. (Isaiah 4:1)

The way men dress in attending Church today pretty much reflects the levity with which they approach worship as well. No one wears the same apparel for every occasion. If we are on a football team, we will wear pads and uniforms reflecting our school colors. If we are on the tennis court, we will wear a sporting outfit meet for the occasion. If we are in the military service, we will wear the uniform of our branch. If we have an appointment to meet the head of a state, we will not wear the same sloppy apparel in which we dress when lounging around the house. We should dress for each occasion. The level of reverence and respect should dictate our dress. If we lightly respect the Word of God, our manner of dress will reflect that disrespect for the One whom we claim to worship. But our dress for church, business, or recreation is not the point of the lesson's text today concerning the Wedding Garment. It is presupposed everyone reading the text understands we do not wear common clothes when attending a wedding service, but apparel that matches the dignity of the occasion. But today's text rises to an even higher symbolism than that mentioned thus far – it is the salvation Robe of Righteousness which Christ offers to His Elect and which we must possess at the marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The WEDDING GARMENT referenced in the text is a special garment worn by wedding guests of the time of Jesus. It was considered most disrespectful to fail to wear this garment to a wedding. The custom prevails today in many countries of the Far, and Middle, East; and even in some nations of Europe. For example, our granddaughter lives in Norway. On her confirmation into the Church, she was required to purchase a special garment that is quite expensive. It has gold or silver buckles, silk skirts, and colorful

design hand-sewn into the fabric. But the purchase is a one-time affair. She will wear that same garment on her wedding day, to the wedding of others, and, finally, she will be buried in that garment. So you can see, it is a very special article of clothing. No young lady in Norway will be found without such a garment. The same was true of the Wedding Garment of today's text.

There has been only one marriage in which a wedding garment was not appropriate – that of Adam and Eve! They needed no wedding garment because they knew no sin at the moment of their wedding. Later, God had to kill the first animal, ever to experience death, in Eden to cover their nakedness.

There are many veiled references to this Garment mentioned in Holy Writ. One such reference is that of the BEST ROBE the father placed on the prodigal son on his return – a boy covered with the filth and wastes of the pig sty. *Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.* (Luke 15:22-24) Need I remind any that we were ALL dead in trespasses and sin ere we received that Robe of Righteousness, to cover our sins, from our Lord Jesus Christ?

If we have Christ as our Savior, Redeemer, Lord, and Sovereign, we are part of the Universal Church of God. We may not hold a membership certificate to any formal church institution, but the church of God is not contained in stone walls. The moment of our calling and election in Christ, we are adorned with that Wedding Garment, or Robe of Righteousness. Why a Wedding Garment? Because the Church is the Bride of Christ! Like Adam and Eve, we are helpless to cover our nakedness and sin. We must be provided a Wedding Garment to cover our sins. Just as an innocent animal had to die to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve in Eden, so must a perfect and righteous Redeemer die in our stead if we can be accounted righteous before God – an imputed righteousness of the Redeemer, and not our own.

This WEDDING GARMENT of God cannot be produced or purchased by any man. It must be freely received by the believer in all of the works and benefits of Christ. We may attempt to produce our own garments of righteousness, but allow me to remind you, *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* (Isaiah 64:6 (KJV) *There is none righteous, no, not one.* (Romans 3:10)

Just as there are different kinds of garments, there are, as well, different responses evoked in the eyes of others. My mother used to tell me *'the clothes make the man.'* If you wish to appear casual, simply wear a shirt and pants. If you wish to convey an attitude of respect and gravity, wear a suit. This comports well with the opinion of one of the best, if not the best, field commanders of contemporary history – General George S. Patton. Patton required, even in harsh field conditions, his men to wear appropriate uniforms in the appropriate manner. He believed that when soldiers dress and look like soldiers, their appearance and personal pride will be reflected in their conduct as soldiers. I believe so, too! So the Wedding Garment is the uniform of the Child of God. It reflects the love of God for us in sending forth His only Begotten Son to die in our stead and for our salvation. When men and women see the Garment we wear, they should be reminded of the Savior whom we follow and claim as our own.

The WEDDING GARMENT, and common apparel as well, serve to defend our persons from the harshness of the elements. Heavy garments also protect against the blows of the enemy. The WEDDING GARMENT protects us from the assault of the devil and his minions. We are defended from the scourge of sin and its consequences. Though our worldly garments may fail to defend our bodies against the persecutor's sword, the

Wedding Garment defends our souls against every enemy thrust. Worldly garments are subject to stain, rotting away, and filth of sin; but the Wedding Garment of Christ is spotless and will sustain no impurities of faith or doctrine. So Christ says to His Church and Elect: *Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.* (Song 4:7)

You may wonder how the quoted text of Isaiah 4:1 fits into our discussion? I believe it totally applicable to our study of the WEDDING GARMENT. In what way, you ask?

When Holy Scripture makes reference to womanhood in prophetic terms, it always relates to a religious institution – either good or bad. The text from Isaiah is speaking prophetically of those future events of the preceding chapter of Isaiah (chap 3). In THAT day! We have a woman referred to in Revelations: *1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* (Rev 17:1-2) This is the great false church of anti-Christ!. We are given a clue of its identity later in the same chapter: *9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.* (Rev 17:9) Many of the great Reformers believed this reference to be of Rome since it is famously known as the city of seven hills.

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Another prophetic reference to a woman is found, again, in Revelations: *1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* (Rev 12:1-4) This woman represents Israel of every age – the Old Testament and the New Testament Church. The Red Dragon is identified as the devil, and the third part of the stars of heaven are the fallen angels (demons) cast down with him.

The seven churches of Revelations are generally considered to represent each type of church that we may expect to identify in all ages. Some, such as Smyrna, are poor in worldly wealth, but rich in spirit. Others, such as the Laodicean church, is luke-warm and compromising with the world. I believe we are approaching a time when few, if any, churches will adhere to the clear and compelling doctrine of Scripture. They adopt the ways of the world in music, worship, dress, and behavior. But they still desire to be called Christians for the purposes of respectability. . . . *in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.* They desire not to eat the Bread of Heaven (which is Christ) but to eat their own leavened bread of the world. They prefer to wear their filthy rags of righteousness to the spotless Robe Christ offers as a covering for their sin. If you doubt these conclusions, look around you and see! The largest church in my hometown is one block from my home. When they have ‘youth night,’ the walls swell with heavy metal music that fails to mention the cross or even the name of our Lord. Young couples can be observed smooching in the shadows of the portal of the church. Is this that we have come to as a church? Wake up Christian people. It is time to REPENT and REVIVE!

Be sure to wear your WEDDING GARMENT to the coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb!