

His Robe

Or

Mine

Elder Frank B. Phillips

The Wedding Garment

The Introduction

The parable of the wedding garment holds a particular interest for God's people today. It, along with the parable of the ten virgins, has never been completed. In both cases the end of the parable does not occur until Jesus receives His bride. In the first parable the Groom is waiting for the bride. In the second, the bride is waiting for the Groom.

The wedding, itself, represents the union of humanity with divinity. The wedding garment, that must be worn, represents the character of Christ, which is an essential for each guest attending the marriage if they are to be accepted by the Father as the Groom's bride.

Matthew 22 pictures three separate occasions when the King, the Groom's Father, sent His servants out to bring the bride in for the wedding. The bride had been chosen and she had been informed and knew she was to be married to the Groom. The record reads, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11. The church, His chosen bride, was too busy and did not wish to consummate the marriage on the terms required by the Groom.

The problem was the wedding garment. The bride had insisted upon wearing a garment of her own choice—not that plain, old-fashioned garment which the Groom's Father had planned for her to wear.

The bride finally became so angered about the whole plan that she decided the only way out was to get rid of the Groom. In order for her to do this it was necessary for her to take full legal responsibility for the deed. There was a trial and, even though the judge and mob knew that the Groom was innocent, a great cry was heard from the bride, ". . . Away with him, away with him, crucify him." John 19:15. So the terrible deed was done. The sense of relief to the bride was short-lived, however, for the words of the

Groom, spoken many days before, began to trouble her: “. . . Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John 2:19. The bride remembered how many miracles He had performed when alive and her fear knew no bounds.

True to His word, the Groom returned on the third day—alive and well. He told one of the members of the bride’s party that He must make a quick trip to see His Father to make sure that everything was all right as far as His own efforts to carry out His Father’s plan were concerned. John 20:17.

The trip was made and on the same day He was back visiting with some of the members of the bride’s family. This visit caused many of the bridal party to think very seriously. Could this be the same person that was crucified three days before? Finally, they were convinced that He was, indeed, the same person. The Groom’s joy was great at being recognized, and He sent the whole group out to find the rest of the bridal party and bring them back to Him. The bride, however, had other ideas and refused to come. It was that wedding garment problem again.

The root of the problem was that every single member of the bride’s party (the church) who had ever claimed to believe and accept the Groom had received a wedding garment. The question was not where to purchase one or how to make one, for when they accepted the invitation to become a member of the bride’s party the garment was received as a gift. The problem was wearing it!

Now there came a time quite soon after this when the groom saw that He was not going to be married to His chosen bride, for she refused to wear the garment. He, therefore, told His friends to stop trying to convince His chosen bride to come and accept Him. He told them to go anywhere and find Him a bride that would be willing to wear the garment.

They traveled far and wide. In fact, they went over the “face of the whole earth” to carry the gospel (the good news) giving the invitation (Colossians 1:23), but not many were interested.

For the next (approximately) eighteen hundred years many servants were sent out to represent the Groom and to invite anyone to join the bridal party. It seemed the old question kept coming up— the wedding garment. Some said that it was not necessary to be so rigid. Some felt that their own garment was good enough. The arguments went on and on.

The time came when even the servants, themselves, were confused. They were inviting the guests without even mentioning the garment that was necessary to be worn. Some even said, “If you give enough money, you won’t need to worry about the garment.” There were many who said, “We are not sure what the garment is all about anyway, so just forget it; only believe and you will be welcomed by the Groom.”

The years rolled by and the bride was still not ready. The Groom was anxious to come and receive His bride so He sent special instructions through one member of the bride’s party. He had often sent special instruction to His bride by special messengers and, again, He hoped to clear away some of the problems that had been to confusing by using this special gift. In these messages He was careful to give more detailed instructions as to how to put on and wear the garment that seemed such a problem. The special instructions were welcomed by some and rejected by others. Those who accepted the added help seemed to get along well with the garment in question. They found it a real blessing that solved all of their problems. Those who rejected the help seemed to still have the same old difficulties.

In time the King knew that He could not put the wedding off much longer. Therefore, He impressed Elders Jones and Waggoner in November in 1888 to meet with a part of the bridal party who were in conference studying how best to prepare the bride for the wedding. These two men insisted that the message they were preaching was the true way to get ready for the wedding.

The wedding garment was the problem again. Some were willing to wear part of the garment if they could adjust it to blend with their own. Others said they wanted no

part of it at all. A few saw the garment as a gift and accepted it, wearing it gladly ever after.

The problem was not settled, however, as far as the bride was concerned. In a few years the problem seemed to go away. Another effort was made by the Groom to awaken His bride from her deadly slumber. This occurred in the early part of this century. Books were written and sent out with clear instruction as to how to get ready for the wedding. The bride, however, was still not sure about the garment, even though the Groom had continuously kept calling to her, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments . . ." Isaiah 52:1.

In patience the Groom waited until He could scarcely wait longer. Problems in the world were mounting so rapidly. Politically, economically, socially, environmentally, spiritually and physically the world had been brought to the brink of disaster. Once again the Groom has set Himself to prepare His bride to be ready for His soon return by urging them to be willing to wear the garment.

There is no garment like the wedding garment in the whole world. It brings peace, joy, satisfaction and love into the human heart. But it is invisible to the wearer, as well as to other members of the bridal party (the church). However, it becomes the magnetic force to draw others to accept the gospel invitation.

This is the reason that it was only when the King came in to see the guests at the wedding that the one not having on the wedding garment was speechless when asked about it. Matthew 22:12. He felt at home with the party until the King came in. Only then did he realize his pretense was recognized, and he was without excuse. Remember, he had received a garment when he accepted the invitation. What could he say? There, across his lap, was the garment neatly folded. He believed the principles it represented, but it was so uncomfortable to wear, it was so restricting. He intended to put it on and wear it, but not yet. No wonder he was speechless.

This book is intended to clearly reveal how to receive and wear the wedding garment which all must have and wear if they are to meet the Lord in peace and not be speechless when He comes. As you read the next chapter you will discover who is behind all this confusion and how you may be free from his power. Then, and only then, can we see clearly the “how” and “why” of God’s great plan of redemption.

10/17/03