

... and His **BRIDE** has made herself ready.

The Secret of the Wedding Garment

in Revelation 19:8



Sheila Mangum



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of the
Wedding Garment
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Revelation 19:8*

Preparing Your Heart for Eternity

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Let us rejoice and shout for joy!

Let us give Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb has come [at last] and His bride (the redeemed) has prepared herself.” She has been permitted to dress in fine linen, dazzling white and clean—for the fine linen signifies the righteous acts of the saints [the ethical conduct, personal integrity, moral courage, and godly character of believers].

Revelation 19:7-8 (AMP)

To my husband, Steve . . .

I knew the day your tears fell on my hands as you
prayed for me that God had placed my fragile heart
in the perfect earthly hands.

I love you!

Endorsements

“Sheila has written such a timely and important message as she shares the results of years of study, diligence, and prayer in *The Secret of the Wedding Garment in Revelation 19:8*. When you read this book, you'll consider preparing yourself for eternity in a whole new way!”

— **Lysa TerKeurst**, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and president of Proverbs 31 Ministries

“With each sentence prayerfully penned on every page, Jesus whispers, “I see you. All of you. And it’s your prepared heart that matters most to Me.” Sheila’s words and hard-earned wisdom show us it is time to pull away from all that is pulling on us, to feel God’s holy love more deeply and heal our wounds more completely!”

— **Renee Swope**, author of *A Confident Heart* and *A Confident Mom*

“If you purchase only one book this year, it should be *The Secret of the Wedding Garment in Revelation 19:8*. This timely and timeless message by Sheila Mangum will help you discover the sacred romance you were created for and transform your understanding of your forever Groom, who loves you like no other.”

— **Leah DiPascal**, Bible teacher, podcast creator, and author

“I could envision Jesus and the amphitheater of the heavenly host standing and cheering Sheila Mangum on as she wrote this timeless jewel of a book. It’s one you’ll treasure time and time again as you dive deeper and deeper into the depths of Christ’s heart and His eternal plans for His bride.”

—**Sharon Glasgow**, Sharon Glasgow Ministries, Glasgow Farm Church, and Proverbs 31 Ministries speaker

“There has never been a more timely message for the believer. Sheila grips your heart with truth and clearly teaches how to prepare for the coming of Christ. Sheila doesn’t want anyone to show up to the wedding supper unadorned. I couldn’t put this book down. Each page of *The Secret of the Wedding Garment in Revelation 19:8* is filled with encouragement and love.”

—**Wendy Pope**, author of *Jesus Everlasting* and *Wait and See*

“Sometimes, God interrupts our lives with an eye-opening encounter to help us live our remaining days on earth fully. Fully aware. Fully dressed. And fully ready for eternity. *The Secret of the Wedding Garment in Revelation 19:8* is a soul-awakening plea to be prepared, beginning with Sheila’s death-to-life encounter and moving into the subsequent wisdom that was revealed to her through years of patient obedience and study. Now, we are blessed to be able to digest this wisdom in only the time it takes to read this treasure.”

—**Cortney Donelson**, ghostwriter, co-founder of *GirlStory* magazine, author of *Clay Jar Cracked: When We’re Broken But Not Shattered*, and co-author of *The Outlier’s Choice: Why Living an Uncomfortable Life is Worth It*

I cannot now remember whether she was naked or clothed. If she were naked, then it must have been the visible penumbra of her courtesy and joy which produces in my memory the illusion of a great and shining train that followed her across the happy grass. If she were clothed, then the illusion of nakedness is doubtless due to the clarity with which her innermost spirit shone through the clothes. For clothes in that country are not a disguise; the spiritual body lives along each thread and turns them into living organs. A robe or a crown is there as much one of the wearer's features as a lip or an eye.

C. S. Lewis. The Great Divorce



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Father.

Your beloved child is here to listen to what the Spirit has to say to them in this secret. May the pages of this book be turned at Your holy bidding. May this timely message accomplish what You desire to do in Your child's heart, mind, and spirit. What the holy Scriptures bring to light in the following pages is loving and merciful. We thank You for removing the scales from our eyes to see, for the days are darkening at a very fast pace and surely can be felt.

May Your child be found here as one whose days aren't too crammed with meaningless idols over Your Presence, whose hearts aren't too cold to melt with repentance when they hear truth, and whose knees aren't too proud to bow at Your feet before the day when every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10–11).

Only 120 were in the upper room, and this message is for those with like devotion to You (Acts 1:15). Ones who have waited for the moment when You make all things hard, confusing, and painful to be understood and worth it. For that is what *The Secret of the Wedding Garment in Revelation 19:8* promises to do: turn Your love up on loud over their chaos.

You have in this secret the manna Your child needs to never starve themselves again, the balm to heal their overly-licked and festering wounds, the offer to erase their sins' stains, and the heavenly proposal on how to restore what's been heartbreakingly stolen from them. Yes, You have inhaled Your child's prayers and the cries of their heart (Psalm 141:2), and this is Your

response to those sobs and the deep ache they cannot shake or run from.

Through these pages, may You breathe vivacity back into their pains, emptiness, and voids. May this secret be used to wipe their tears, strengthen their resolve to press on to the High Prize in Christ Jesus, and give Your much-needed holy breath to the dry, damaged, and dead places in the desert spots of their sapped and weary hearts.

This secret is not for the faint of heart or the pride-filled heart, nor is it for hearts complacent with worldly offers. This wedding garment is sacred. So, may Your child not be like those fooled into clothing themselves with their own foolishness, self-righteousness, and today's culture over being fitted humbly for this holy garment.

Therefore, before we enter into these pages to study Your holy Scriptures, we ask Your forgiveness for all of the sins that would hold back or hinder this secret's truths from being rooted deeply in our hearts, lest they be snatched or stolen from us . . . "when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them." Mark 4:15.

Yes, unappreciated, misused, and neglected truths can be taken from our hearts, never to take root; yet, Your love can never be snatched from us. How staggering it is to the heart, that the one reading this is offered a place in Your holy heart so deep that no one can snatch them from You, ever. Where we are going in these pages we don't deserve. So, may this holy love and Your mercy be our guide.

Amen.



Preface

My Heart Aches for the Wedding of the Lamb

*We who have run for our very lives to God
have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands
and never let go.*

Hebrews 6:19 (The Message)

My heart has ached for the wedding of the Lamb ever since my earthly father passed away. That has been over thirty years. The disease of alcoholism consumed him, and sadly, when he couldn't find a way out, he committed suicide. I was just a young girl, and his death affected me in so many unannounced ways. I missed his presence regularly. My wedding day, however, was the toughest time. His giving me away and our father-daughter dance had been stolen.

I glanced to where my father should have been and saw only an empty chair. As all brides do, I would have treasured those special moments with him, but of course, I have no framed photograph of either. My wedding dress hid my vulnerable and torn heart, and my veil covered my sad and scared eyes. It felt like my father, choosing suicide, had abandoned me, and I

was left without a sense of belonging, refuge, or security. My heart felt soiled because of the lack, shame, and loss. In many ways, I felt like an orphan. Did you know you could be an orphan without living in an orphanage?

Thankfully, I still had my prayerful mother, who encouraged me. She believed our faithful God would send someone into my life whenever I needed a father figure. And she was right. God did send a father to take my dad's place. He arranged for someone to care for my needs, to nurture my wounded heart, and to be the solid foundation an orphan needs in a father. He sweetly sent someone who would never abandon me or reject me.

*God sent Himself as a Father to me
and my crippled and
spiritually torn heart.*

God sent Himself as a Father to me and my crippled and spiritually torn heart. He fulfilled what He promises in Psalm 68:5: "A father of the fatherless, and a defender of widows, is God in his holy habitation." (NKJV) God has been so very faithful to offer me what the years of my childhood of insecurity and immaturity stole: Fatherly love, wisdom, security, refuge, spiritual discernment, and belonging.

One day, there will be a wedding where my Father's presence is known. His seat will be filled. His love will surround this

place without tears or pain. Yes, my heart aches for the wedding of the Lamb. Does yours?

I've spent years clinging to the hem of His garment, devouring His every word, and knowing I am to be spiritually preparing myself for that day. It has taken every bit of those years for me to wrestle with this secret, ponder it, and guard it with all my heart.

Wrestling with a message means you tussle in war with it until it wins you over and burns hotly in your heart. Pondering a message means your eyes and ears remain open to the Spirit's wisdom, leading, and teaching on the message's truth. Guarding a message with all your heart is protecting it fiercely by making sure the content is biblically sound, consecrated unto the Lord, heart-stirring, and heart-changing for whom it is written.

I have been touched to tears by searching the Holy Scriptures and the comfort found in the wisdom of His words. Now I present to you what I have found to be a possible interpretation of the Revelation 19:8 wedding garment.

One that answered for me the questions our spiritual hearts might not know to ask, yet need to cure their aches and to prepare us for the hour of great-shaking and the future wedding of the Lamb.

I am so happy you are here.

*It's time for this
secret.*





Introduction

Discovering the Secret of the Wedding Garment

*It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen,
bright and clean; for the fine linen is
the righteous acts of the saints.*
Revelation 19:8

I love discovering godly secrets. And from my experience, living out the godly secret of the wedding garment in Revelation 19:8 holds the comfort and peace we all need as we wrestle with hard questions and hard things, making this message both weighty and timely. I pray you, too, will discover and embrace this secret, for the days are growing too dark and too cold to go on without it.

In Revelation 19, the apostle John—the disciple beloved of Jesus (John 20:2)—witnesses heavenly multitudes praising God at the future marriage of Christ, the Lamb, and His bride—the church. And then in verse 8, he tells us the bride is

given a garment “to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean.” But how was this wedding garment—a garment of the heart—made for this glorious day? Who participated in its creation? What does it represent? How was it made bright and clean?

A Garment of the Heart

Before I answer those questions and tell you the secret of the wedding garment, let’s look at what the significance of a garment’s condition meant in biblical times, when the book of Revelation was written as a result of John’s vision.

A garment’s material and condition were sometimes an indicator of pain. Made of sackcloth, for instance, a garment of mourning was the outward appearance of an inward, grieving heart. Garments represented the heart. And a garment that had been rent—torn—was the outward appearance of an inward broken heart, in pain and no longer spiritually whole. We see this in many Bible accounts, and here are a few examples:

“When Mordecai learned all that had been done [against his people], he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.” (Esther 4:1)

“David [after Saul and Jonathan’s deaths] took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him. They mourned and wept and fasted until evening.”
(2 Samuel 1:11–12)

“Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground, and worshiped.”
(Job 1:20)

“So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.”
(Genesis 37:34)

Physical garments, then, sometimes revealed the spiritual and emotional heart condition of those who wore them. But we also “wear” spiritual garments that mean the same. Since the fall of man, every human being has been born separated from God by a sinful nature.

But through accepting Christ’s gift of salvation—His paying the price for our sin on the cross—our hearts are made clean and whole. Our “garment of salvation” (and the robe of righteousness), then, is gifted and paid for on our behalf (Isaiah 61:10). But the wedding garment in Revelation 19:8 is different.

In Revelation 3:4, John tells us he heard Jesus say those who will walk with Him will be “dressed in white, for they are worthy.” (NIV) And in Revelation 19:7, we’re told, “the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready,” meaning she’s ready to be presented with her wedding garment.

The wedding garment presented to her, then, reflects more than a heart saved; its appearance and material—a fine linen—reflect a holy heart, worthy for ultimate union with a holy God. She is not dressed in filthy rags. She is not naked. She’s prepared.

Unprepared

Holy is the condition of the heart God requires on that day when we stand before Him, “that He might present to Himself

the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:27) Too many of us, though, are unprepared for that day. Instead, we live with hearts damaged and torn by the realities of life, in a state of struggle, doing what we don’t want to do (Romans 7:19). We ask ourselves questions like this:

- *Why have I been so foolish, felt so weak, and lived defeated as a devoted believer in the gospel?*
- *How many more days must my eyes swell from the countless tears over this one unanswered prayer?*
- *How will God work out this stab in my bleeding heart for good in my life?*
- *How do I raise a family in a seemingly soulless and godless world?*
- *How do I resign to God’s will when it appears harsh at times?*
- *Where is justice (mine included) on this earth?*
- *Why are hearts not changing and people falling morally?*

Yet by the grace of God, the wedding dress in Revelation 19:8 bears a secret—not only for helping us find answers to questions like the ones above but in asking ourselves, *With my tempestuous heart, am I spiritually prepared for the day I will stand before God?*

Here is the secret that will change you.....

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Preparing Your Heart for Eternity



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