Isaiah 61:10-62:3 (v.3) Then you will be a beautiful crown in the Lord’s hand, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.

As you heard me say in the introduction to our Old Testament reading, this section is indeed a prophecy concerning what the Lord will bring through his Savior, the promised Messiah. As you study these words you can’t help but be filled with awe at the wonder and marvel of what they say. They are a near perfect declaration of what God will and has done for us in Jesus and what is even more awesome about these words is that even at the time of Jesus they were already 700 years old. Today they are some 2,700 years old and the message they contain is still as pertinent as the day the words were written. Such is the marvel and wonder of God. What God declares and says does not change. That’s because the Lord our God and His Son Jesus do not change. So to those who will decry our faith “because you believe a 2,000 year old book,” (actually we believe a 4,000 year old book) I will reply, “You bet I do. Because it is God’s Word and what God has said and revealed does not and will not change or be proven false.”

Let’s see what the Lord declared concerning the salvation he would bring. Our theme will be: **TWO VOICES DECLARING SALVATION.**

As we begin looking at these words it is important to keep context in mind, and by context I mean the point and words of the chapters found in and around this section. It is as you do that, paying attention to nouns, pronouns, verbs and such of the original language, the marvel of what is being said becomes clearer and clearer. Take our verses. Note that one section is actually the end of chapter 61 and one section is the beginning of chapter 62. Between these sections there is change in the speakers and yet the speakers are both declaring the same wonder and marvel of salvation. The most important thing to do is to determine who the speakers are.

When we look at our first section here is where context is important. Note that verse 10 declares: **“I will rejoice greatly in the Lord. My soul will surely rejoice in my God, because he clothed me in garments of salvation.”** This verse helps us to grasp who is speaking. There would be those who say these are the words of the Savior, but that cannot be. It cannot be because nowhere in Isaiah or the rest of Scripture do you find any passages that declare that the Messiah is clothed with garments of salvation rather what you find is that the Messiah is always the bringer of salvation, yes the one who clothes others. Recognizing that these words are not the Messiah or God speaking we then ask who is declaring this wonder? The answer is: Israel or if you would, the personified church of believers. In other words, this is the declaration of all those who believe in what the Savior does. With that established, let’s see what is said and what the Savior does.

Notice that the Savior will bring joy, great joy. That’s the first line. Then we hear these words: **“My soul will surely rejoice in my God, because he clothed me in garments of salvation. In a robe of righteousness he covered me, like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful turban like a priest, and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewels.”** In these words we again hear of the joy, a joy that is caused because of **“garments of salvation…a robe of righteousness.”** Let’s look a bit closer.

Please be aware of the fact that in each case, these garments or the robe is not something that we put on ourselves, but rather is something that “HE” will do. The **HE** is none other than the Lord our God. God will clothe us, God will cover us with the proper and right garments in order that we might be a part of his forever wedding celebration. Make sure you grasp this. All the acts of saving, all the acts of redemption are of and from God!

Why do we need such garments and robes? Well, it is because of sin. Sin is disobedience to God and what he has revealed. Sin is something that pervades and invades all of our lives. Want to know if you have sin? Ask yourself, “Can I die?” It is very clear in God’s Word that physical death is the result of sin. Adam and Eve, after they sinned, they are the first to have the pronouncement of physical death upon them. It was an act of God’s grace. God was granting them a release from all the trouble, horror and stain that their sin brought upon the world. But, of course, physical death is only a release as long as you can escape the “second death.” The second death is the reality of hell and damnation. There are four passages in Revelation that reveal the problem of the second death. So how do we escape, how do we avoid this clear problem that sin has brought?

The answer is: God. It is God who clothes us with righteousness, in our text called “garments of salvation” and “a robe of righteousness.” God clothes us, God covers us. In truth this is a wonderful way to speak of the forgiveness of sin found in Jesus our Lord and Savior. Did you know that term “righteousness” is found some 238 times in Scripture? Did you know it is used some 75 plus times in the New Testament? Almost all in the context of declaring righteousness what God will do for us. God gives us the forgiveness of sin and eternal life. God, in Christ our Savior, considers us holy and good, pure and perfect, all because Jesus paid for our sins and Jesus then covers us with his righteousness. It is this righteousness of Jesus that God sees when he looks at those whose faith is in Jesus. Romans 3:21-22 sums it up best: **“But now, completely apart from the law, a righteousness from God has been made known. The Law and the Prophets testify to it. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ Jesus to all and over all who believe.”** Yep, the righteousness of Isaiah is the same righteousness of Romans! God grants us eternal life and salvation in Jesus, through Jesus, because of Jesus and what He has done and accomplished for us. And this righteousness makes us the happiest, the most joyful people there are. There is more to say, but let’s move on for now.

Our next verses declare basically the same thing with one slight but important point. Verse 11 says, **“For as the earth produces its growth, and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up, so God the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.”** Do you note the wonder here? Please note that this righteousness is going to be as sure and certain, as expected and desired as the fact that this world of our causes seeds to grow and harvests to come. Did you know that the Lord promises that this fact of creation is not going to stop until the very Day of Judgment? That’s how sure God’s gift of righteousness is. This righteousness is not limited to just Jewish people for our text clearly tells us it will sprout up before all the nations. God’s salvation will be for all. God doesn’t care about your race, color or ethnic background. Jesus came to suffer, die and rise from the dead for all people.

I think all of us can grasp that this is so very true of the message of Jesus. He came to one little land in the world, and today His name is spread to all the lands of the world. It bothers me at times that the world only promotes Jesus as some sort of do gooder who simply came to show us how to better our lives and live in the world. No, Jesus came as God and Lord. Jesus came to reveal the truth and facts of all that God’s Word declares. Namely, we are lost sinners who need a Savior. He is the one who has paid for those sins and He is the one who invites you to believe and follow Him, to put your faith in what He has done and accomplished. Yes, this message of salvation by grace through faith is indeed for all the world to hear and believe. Thank God for that. Thank God Jesus came to save us all!

Now on to our next section. Please note there is a speaker change. We go from hearing the joy of the believer to once again hearing the promises of God, the sure and certain declaration of God that He will do, he will cause these things to be. The text says, **“For the sake of Zion I will not be silent. For the sake of Jerusalem I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth shining brightly, and her salvation like a blazing torch. Nations will see your righteousness, and all kings will see your glory. You will be called by a new name, that the Lord’s mouth will specify. Then you will be a beautiful crown in the Lord’s hand, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.”**

Again there is so much wonder here. Here is God telling us He will not rest until all of his promises, all of his righteousness does take place. What is amazing is how these words fit the entire period of the New Testament Christian Church. When Jesus walked the streets and was actively working at redeeming God’s people do you recall how he refused to be quiet, refused to stop speaking the truth and wonder of God. And once that righteousness of Jesus was clearly revealed through his resurrection, then Jesus ascends into heaven to continue his work of salvation. He was the Light that came to this world. He is the Light that shines brightly though the world denies it. He is the cause of you and I, yes, of the church functioning as **“a blazing torch.”** That means we are the light of the Lord, the ones who proclaim his message and declare his salvation for all the world. Right now, our lights shine in the truth of the Lord but we recognize that when Jesus returns again it will be his glory once again ablaze for all the world to see.

And what a joy to hear of the new name. What is so interesting is that this whole chapter gives a number of names for this body of believers. Those names alluded to here are: Hephzibah, Beulah, Derusha and Lo Naazebah. In order those names mean: My Delight is in her, Married, Holy People, and Those not abandoned. Think of how 1 Peter 2:9 declares these words true when it says, **“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the people who are God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”** Or think of how this will come true when the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God comes down from God. If you are familiar with that revelation of God then you would note how that city is also declared a “beautiful bride” in keeping with the wedding theme often associated with salvation.

But for me, the most important thing to note is the fact that once again it is emphasized that all that is going on is the work and accomplishment of the Lord our God. It is God who will work to do this. It is God who will bring forth the righteousness and who will give us a new name. It is the Lord who will cause us to be **“a beautiful crown in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the palm of your God.”**

Let me share with you the words of Pastor August Pieper and his great work on Isaiah. He says of this verse: *The church will be a glorious diadem, a royal crown in the hand of the Lord. The kingly crown here represents the most glorious and most beautiful ornament available. It is an ornament made of the most costly materials and is a sigh of the most exalted human dignity…In this picture it is the church that is being depicted as the most precious and glorious work of the Lord, as His masterpiece, in comparison with which even heaven and earth, which are doomed to pass away are as nothing. It is the church, which is held in the hand of the Lord, to the wonder and amazement of the whole world.”* I thought those words important especially for those who like to malign the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints that the Lord has given. Church is important!

Well, again much more could be said. But I think you grasp already the wonder and joy of this verse. God is promising a sure and certain salvation for us. Jesus has brought that salvation with his righteousness that is now ours. Rejoice, rejoice greatly in the Lord our God and his wonder of salvation. Amen.