

The Robes of Salvation

“I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” Isaiah 61:10

There are many beautiful pictures of salvation in the Bible, and many verses which teach us directly what it means to be saved from our sins. There is the straight doctrine which is clearly seen in the book of Romans, teaching us that, *“in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is from faith to faith...”* (Romans 1:17) Paul also told us that *“this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”* (Romans 3:22). The gospel, then, speaks of a righteousness from Christ which covers us completely on Judgment Day.

But sometimes an image can be just as powerful as the straight doctrine, and here Isaiah teaches the same thing as Paul, only in picture form. Isaiah speaks of a joy which is deep and profound, which comes from the depths of his soul. There is nothing in all the world which produces as much joy in the heart as full assurance of salvation in Christ. Isaiah then goes on to paint a magnificent picture of that righteousness which he has received from his God: *“He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”* The image is one of the ornate attire and adornment appropriate for a wedding day. In every nation on earth, weddings have their own cultural expressions suitable to the occasion. Almost all of them involve elaborate clothing, lavish feasts, and joyful celebrations. In Japan, for example, bride and groom will sometimes go through seven sets of ceremonial clothing!

Isaiah focuses on the clothing and likens the righteousness we have received from Christ to the way a bride and groom deck themselves out for their special day. In Isaiah's day, the bridegroom put a special head adornment on similar to that worn by priests. Exodus 39:28 called it a "turban of fine linen," and Zechariah 3:5 also mentions this beautiful and clean linen turban. Meanwhile, a bride would completely adorn herself with special wedding jewels that sparkled and radiated, catching the light and refracting it in dazzling colors. Jewelry can sometimes be worn in an ungodly way (Jeremiah 4:30, Hosea 2:13, Ezekiel 23:40; also 1 Timothy 2:9, and 1 Peter 3:3 where jewels take the place of good deeds), but jewels can also be evidence of a husband's love for a wife or God's love for His people (Ezekiel 16:7-11). Here Isaiah speaks of bridal jewelry as a picture of the glorious beauty of the righteousness God gives us as a simple gift through faith in Christ.

When you think of yourself before God, do you see yourself this way—clothed in glorious and beautiful righteousness from Christ? Do you realize that God is as dazzled by this robe as a husband would be of his wife on their wedding day? Do you see that your standing before God is not improved one bit by your performance, but that in Christ, you are as glorious as you can possibly be? The pure linen turban and sparkling wedding jewels cover you with a splendor only God could have bestowed. Rejoice in it today!