

Saint Timothy Lutheran

– Edmonds, WA

January 3, 2010 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“He Has Wrapped Me With A Robe Of Righteousness.”

(Text: Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3)

Context: Isaiah here describes how God has saved “Zion” (the true Church). He has wrapped all true believers in “a robe of righteousness.” The true believer in Messiah is given what the Messiah has earned. The righteousness of the Messiah (the Christ) is what is given to the believer. Isaiah, also, calls it a “garment of salvation.” In a sin-darkened world the true Church looks weak and unloved. Now, with the garment of salvation, the Church appears as it truly is. It is the LORD’s delight. It is His Beloved Bride.

I. Zion, The True Church On Earth, Appeared/Appears To Be Weak, Unloved, And Unattractive.

- A. The scattered and enslaved children of Israel suffered hardship of all sorts and, daily, faced the ridicule of their pagan neighbors.
 - 1. Those who lived in Babylon as slaves were treated as lowly servants.
 - 2. These enslaved ones felt that God had abandoned them.
 - 3. Their misery consisted in their own guilt for their wrongdoings and their lack of hope in any help coming from God.
- B. The exiled Hebrews who lived in Egypt faced hardships as well.
 - 1. Their homeland, capital city, and Temple had all been destroyed.
 - 2. They lived as aliens in a foreign land.
 - 3. They were a vast minority.
 - 4. They were separated from the familiar.
 - 5. They were tempted to worship the local gods.
- C. Both groups had, seemingly, been dishonored by their God in the face of others.
 - 1. Abandoned by their God, the pagans felt that they could treat the Hebrews as they wanted to and get away with any bad behavior.
- D. Unbelievers did not fear the Hebrews nor the God who had abandoned them.
 - 1. The pagans were blind to the fact that the one true God had created them also.
 - 2. Sinful, self-centered living seemed to be the way to live successfully.
 - 3. Do whatever you can get away with doing seemed to be the order of the day.
 - a. The Hebrews were no threat and their God was, seemingly, no threat as well.

II. As The One True God’s Spokesman, Isaiah Promises That God Will Cause Righteousness And Praise To Spring Up Before All The Nations.

- A. There will be no doubt that God is working justice, truth, and love in the middle of this sinful world.
 - 1. Just as the earth brings forth its sprouts and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, the LORD will grow His ‘garden’ of righteousness and salvation in front of all the nations of the world.
- B. The Messiah will come to redeem sinners.
 - 1. First, He will do the work of salvation in the middle of the human community for all to see. (He will win forgiveness for all of the sins of the called-out ones.)
 - 2. Secondly, He will give faith in the Messiah to repentant Jews first and then to the repentant Gentiles. (Israel or Zion is to be defined as those who have the faith of Abraham, those who “have wrestled with God.” Note: Israel=‘he who has wrestled with God’).
- C. The dishonor and ugliness of living as a slave, exile, or alien will disappear.
 - 1. Instead of dishonor, God will honor and lift up His redeemed ones for all to see.
 - 2. Instead of feeling abandoned, God will adorn His Bride, the Church, as a bride is adorned in sparkling jewels. (The Church’s glory will be brilliant.)
 - 3. Instead of feeling abandoned, the true Church will be called “Married,” i.e., Beloved of God, the Delight of the LORD God.
 - 4. The true Church will be a “crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD.”
- D. God will help His true Church to love others as He has loved us.
- E. God will help us to declare the mighty deeds of Him who has redeemed us with His holy precious blood.
- F. All praise be to God who has given us a Savior who is Jesus Christ the Lord!