

to give them a garland instead of
ashes or “beauty for ashes”

(ay'-fer takh'-ath peh-ayr')

פאר תחת אפר



(remember, Hebrew is read from right to left)
word for garland or beauty refers to a
head covering.

Isaiah and Ephesians both refer to
putting on the helmet of salvation.

(This might also shed some new light on our class' long-running debate on why Paul required women to pray with their heads covered - Men were seen as symbolizing Christ, the head of the church, therefore they prayed with their heads uncovered but women symbolized the church or the bride of Christ, so they had to pray with covered heads to show that they were approaching God not through their own efforts or goodness but as being covered by the bonnet of salvation. So put on your Easter bonnet this year because so everyone can see that we've been given beauty for ashes!)

Word for ashes and word for beauty is composed of same three letters, just in different order (remember Hebrew is read from right to left so these words are spelled from bottom to top):

Beauty or garland

ר - “human reasoning vs. obedience”

א - “God”

פ - “mouth”

Ashes

ר - “human reasoning vs. obedience”

פ - “mouth”

א - “God”

So, when God speaks to us or convicts us even though our human reasoning is turned away from Him, the response is ashes of mourning and sadness at our sin and hopeless estate.....

but...He takes those ashes and replaces them with a head covering of beauty and joy that is our salvation and our response is to use our reasoning or intelligence to praise and speak of God.

and.....

finally, consider the word “for” or “instead

of". It consists of three letters:

ת - The Cross

ח - Abundant Life

ת - The Cross

Jesus said that he was the beginning and the end and that no man came to the Father except by Him and that he came the we might have life and have it more abundantly, so the word "for" begins and ends with the cross and has abundant life in the middle.

Now let's put it all together, beginning with ashes even though they come last in the actual text.

ר

פ

א

God speaks to us, giving us ashes as we realize and are convicted of our sin and hopeless estate even though our human reasoning is turned away from Him; but since we can do nothing but mourn, God helps us.

ת

ב

ת

We are given life more abundantly beginning and ending with the cross. It is our only hope because our life is surrounded and guarded by it and what it represents. The cross is what gives us beauty for ashes.

ר

א

פ

The beauty is the head covering or the helmet of salvation and since we can't earn it our only response can be to use our mouth or speech that is now turned toward God to praise Him.