



Isaiah 4:2

The Branch

In his vision of the ideal Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Hebrew prophet Isaiah in chapters two and four describes a glorious future that only the Messiah can achieve.

He will judge between the nations,
And will render decisions for many peoples;
And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
And never again will they learn war. . . .

When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then the Lord will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. There will be a shelter to *give* shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little boy will lead them.
Also the cow and the bear will graze,
Their young will lie down together,
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.
They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea.

THE TIME OF THE FULFILLMENT (2:2; 4:1)

These are beautiful word pictures of what will take place during the Messianic era. However, the message is delivered during dark turbulent political times. Against this backdrop, God gave Isaiah a message of hope and encouragement. It takes place "in the last days" (2:2), the last part of the future into which the prophetic vision penetrates. In prophetic language, it is the "day of the LORD." It is a day of judgment on sin (2:5 4:1), but it is also a day when God acts in salvation. The grand climax comes at the Second Coming of Christ.

The events will actually take place "in that day" (4:1). It is the one great day of God at the end of time, opening with judgment and issuing in salvation. It will be the time when God will act. Jerusalem is seen as the center and focus of the great judgment day. Jerusalem will have a remnant that will survive the judgment and will be His redeemed people. The redeemed will be the spiritual centerpiece of the earth.

THE PERSON OF THE BRANCH

"The Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious" person (4:2a).

The future ruler will be the "Branch of the LORD" (v. 2). This *tsemach*, a "sprout, shoot, branch," is clearly a designation for the Messiah. It is a "growing thing" full of vitality and abundant life. It always implies something healthy, living and growing.

Israel is not the Branch, but that which comes from her by God's grace. This *tsemach* is the Messiah who is the greatest branch that God has brought forth. The whole saving work in Christ is presented in the Branch. The Jewish Targum on this passage says *tsemah* is the Messiah (cf. also Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12). "At that time shall the Messiah of the LORD be for joy and glory." The great King of the future is a shoot springing out of the human, Davidic lineage, which the LORD God has caused to sprout or spring to life from the fallen trunk of Israel.

This growing thing will be beautiful (Matthew 5:5; 11:27-30; Galatians 5:22-23). The gentleness of Christ is easy going, not impulsive or given to frequent outbursts. He takes life calmly, casual, collected and informal.

The Branch will be glorious. He is the very radiance of the glory of God, the expression of the divine attributes of the God head (Hebrews 1:1-4). He is the effulgence of the Divine glory.

He will be a shoot springing out of human stock (11:1; cf. v. 10).

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ”

The prophet Jeremiah also announced the stock of the Branch (23:5). "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land." Later he explained, "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth" (33:15; cf. Revelation 5:5).

THE SAVING WORK OF THE BRANCH.

Both Isaiah and Jeremiah declared the salvation of God's people will be connected with the Branch. "For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground . . ." (Isaiah 53:2a). "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, The Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). Zechariah saw the day when God would take away the iniquity and clothe His people with festal robes (Zechariah 3:4). That day of cleansing would be at Calvary when God would open up the fountain for cleansing of sin (13:1; cf. Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:10-14). "Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you —indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (Zechariah 3:8-9).

The whole saving work of God involves the Branch. "In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel" (Isaiah 4:2). The prophet probably had in mind the remnant returning from Babylonian captivity when he speaks of "the survivors of Israel." However, his message looks to a greater remnant of the redeemed of all ages. It is a remnant of God's saving grace.

The Branch of Yahweh will be fruitful. All the nations will come to Him "that He may teach us concerning His ways. And that we may walk in His paths" (2:3). He will make Jerusalem holy (4:3-4). Moreover, the whole mountain of the LORD will become a holy of holies (v. 5). "Then the Lord will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy."

This remnant will be called "holy." The basic idea is separation. Every believer has been set apart to God. They have been consecrated to the Lord and therefore stand under God's providential care. Divine grace is the source of this holiness. It is not something that man achieves or merits. This holiness is a work of grace. Believers have a standing before God. We are holy because of our special relationship to the Branch. We are a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 2:9). Every true Christian is a "holy one," a saint. The moment you believed on Christ as your Savior you were "separated" to Him for His glory. Moreover, in our daily practice we are to be separated, consecrated to God. This is why it is so important to begin every day with a commitment of your life to the Lord. Just a simple prayer that reminds you of your dependence upon Him and asking Him for wisdom, guidance and strength to be all He wants you to be. "Lord Jesus, this is your day. I give it to you. Take my life and do as You please. Live your life through me." A daily reminder of your commitment to Christ will change your life. If your lifestyle is not practically holy then claim the promise of 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 5:18.

This holy remnant which is the fruit of the Branch includes "everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 4:3). Ancient cities kept citizenship records. "Everyone who is recorded for life" is equivalent to being ordained to life (cf. Acts 13:48; Revelation 3:5; 20:11-15). Do you rejoice that your "name written in the book of life"? (Philippians 4:3). Every born again believer in Jesus Christ has his name inscribed in the Book of Life.

Obviously this remnant consists of cleansed people (Isaiah 4:4). "When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning." The depravity of the daughters of Zion (3:16ff) was hidden under their vain finery. Probably Isaiah is referring to the judicial murders committed by the rulers against the poor people when he says the Branch "purged the blood shed of Jerusalem" (cf. 3:13-15).

How does the Branch cleanse? He does it "by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning" (v. 4). He

How does the Branch cleanse? He does it "by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning" (v. 4). He brings conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). The regenerative work of the Holy Spirit is clearly in view. He regenerates and at times destroys. He sifts and refines as in a refiner's fire. His chastening work sifts and destroys all sinful attitudes and behaviors in our lives.

Isaiah uses an unusual expression, "the spirit of burning." Literally, "to burn up," clear away, destroy. He sweeps it clean. John the Baptizer said he came baptizing with water because of repentance, "but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not even fit to remove His sandals; He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:11-12). Isaiah saw the thrice holiness of God and cried out "'O, woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips . . . ' Then the seraphim flew to him with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken off the altar with tongs and touched it to Isaiah's lips and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven'" (Isaiah 6:6-7). Sin and its cleansing are serious business.

The Branch is also the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Messiah is designated "My servant the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8; Jeremiah 23:5). But He is also described as Him whom the LORD causes to sprout, or Him who has sprouted from the LORD. Clearly, He is the Son of God.

THE LORD GUIDES AND PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE.

Isaiah 4:5-6 is a graphic picture that refers us back to the days of the Exodus and Israel's wandering in the wilderness when they were being guided by the pillar of fire and the cloud (Exodus 13:21; 14:19, 24; 33:9, 10; 40:34). The cloud and the fire were to be a reminder of the presence of God with His people. God came near and was there to guide and protect His people. Isaiah tells us on that day it won't be just the Temple itself that is filled with smoke, but the whole Mount Zion would become a holy of holies! The glory of God will fill the city.

Moreover, the creative hand of the LORD is seen at work as in the days of creation. There is divine action and miraculous production by the Branch. There is a fresh manifestation of Yahweh's presence. After the cleaning of Jerusalem, "the Lord will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy" (4:5). At night it will be a fiery splendor or a flaming brightness of real and living fire.

The future glory of Israel is to be found in the LORD God Himself.

The cloud is "over her assemblies" (v. 5). I cannot help but reflect upon our Lord Jesus with Peter, James and John at His Transfiguration. "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light" (Matthew 17:2). That is only a foretaste of what is in store in the future of the Messiah and Jerusalem. The purified city will be bathed in the sunshine of God's holiness and grace. It will be altogether beautiful and lovely. The same judging fire that purged them will be the fire of salvation and protection.

The Lord Jesus Christ in His glorified person is the true *Shechinah*. He is the true indwelling of God in His body. Furthermore, the indwelling presence of Christ through His Spirit is the highest privilege of every believer.

Isaiah pictures in v. 6 the "shelter" (*sukkah*), or literally a booth or tabernacle over Zion. It is there for protection. God takes care of His chosen people. Christ is our protection.

Yes, the Branch is altogether lovely and beautiful. We wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to see the completion of the fulfillment of His judgment and salvation as promised in Isaiah 2 and 4. We shall see Isaiah develop more fully the person and work of the Branch in chapters seven through twelve.

If you have never put your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, please take a few moments to reflect over [A Free Gift for You](#). It is our prayer that you will come to know Him as your Savior.

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