

Session 6

The Branch of the LORD and Purification of Zion

Isaiah Oracle by Oracle / Dr. Randy White

Isaiah 4:1-6

Session Purpose

To consider Isaiah 4:1-6 as a prophetic picture of judgment, restoration, messianic hope, and the future glory of Zion.

The Desire (v. 1)

- Isaiah refers to “that day” (v. 1), but leaves it undefined.
 - An undefined “day” in a prophetic context often points to the Day of the Lord, or to that broader complex of end-time judgment and restoration.
 - Here, “that day” is collectively the day of the judgment of chapter 3 and the subsequent triumph of the Messiah.
 - All of chapter 4 is an elaboration of “that day,” and one that is often overlooked by students of the millennium (as we now call “that day”).
- Who are the “seven women” and “one man” of verse 1?
 - Option 1: an allusion to the social disorder that was described in chapter 3, and the loss of men through the warfare of the coming last days.
 - Option 2: symbolic of “all Israel” (the seven women) and Israel’s Messiah (the one man).
 - * This is not an obvious interpretive option, but does have its merit.
 - * Israel is often depicted as a woman (Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:2, 8; Hosea 2:19-20), so the feminine image itself would not be foreign to the prophets.
 - * Seven is typically a number for spiritual completion (Genesis 2:2-3; Leviticus 23:15-16; Revelation 1:20), which at least makes a representative reading possible.
 - * Israel is prophesied as being a divided and scattered nation at the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy (Deuteronomy 30:3-5; Ezekiel 36:19, 24; Ezekiel 37:21-22), so a picture of plurality gathered into unity would fit that broader prophetic pattern.
 - * Jesus spoke of “sheep not of this fold” (John 10:16) that He must bring

together under “one shepherd” (John 10:16; Ezekiel 37:24), which could align with this verse’s illustration of seven women and one man, though this is more an echo of the theme than a direct proof of the interpretation.

- * If one takes Revelation 2-3 as having future covenant relevance, the number seven there may be suggestive, but that connection should be held loosely.
- Both options may have explanatory value, and the passage may allow for layered meaning: a literal-social crisis in the foreground, with a broader symbolic resonance in the background.
- * Because the scripture is not explicit, I would be cautious insisting on one or the other.
- * However, because it has a clearly symbolic tone, I would also be cautious on insisting that there is no “between the lines” communication in verse 1.
- The desire of the women: “let us be called by thy name” (v. 1).
 - They are willing to shame themselves to take the name of this “one man.”
 - Whatever the setting, the situation is almost catastrophic, so that the “women” are willing to humiliate themselves.

The Day (v. 2)

- Isaiah 4:2 is the first prophetic use of “branch” referring to the coming Messiah.
- In the KJV, it is not capitalized, as it is in other prophetic-messianic Branch passages (see Isaiah 11:1).
- It is not required to take this messianically, but it sure seems most plausible.
- Is this “beautiful and glorious” branch the “one man” of verse 1? Once again, it is certainly within the realm of robust argumentation, contextually if nothing else.
- The further result: “the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.”

In Jerusalem (v. 3)

- Verse 3 is specifically about the one who is “left in Zion,” or “remaineth in Jerusalem” or is “living in Jerusalem.”
 - This raises a question: could verses 1-2 emphasize “them that are escaped of Israel” (v. 2), while verse 3 narrows the focus to those in Jerusalem?
 - * If so, that would at least preserve the possibility that verse 1 has a wider horizon than Jerusalem alone, though John 10:16 and Revelation 2-3 should probably be treated as thematic parallels rather than direct identifications.
 - * While there is a blessing for those outside (“the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel” [v. 2]), verse 3 promises greatness and glory for those “living in Jerusalem”; specifically, these “shall be called holy.”
 - * It is possible that those living in the land are *taken there* from outside the land, and thus verse 3 could describe a subsequent stage in the same restoration, rather than an entirely separate group.
 - * This would align with passages like Isaiah 11:11-12.
- Verse 3 mentions, “every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.”
 - The New Testament has a “book of life” concept that *could* be taken to be the “book

- of the living.”
- If taken in such manner, then the ones that shall be “called holy” will be those in this book.
- This may suggest a more Hebrew-textured way of reading the New Testament “book of life,” rather than treating the phrase only through later theological systems.
- One thing that must be considered: how far should the singular masculine be pressed in verse 3?
 - In verse 1 it is clearly “one man.”
 - In verse 3, the text is specifically masculine and singular. However, that is often used in Hebrew as a manner of saying, “anyone.” Hebrew rarely bothers with a distinction between male and female unless it specifically matters, and often uses a singular “stand-in” pronoun to refer to any individual.
 - So the singular in verse 3 should not be pressed in the same way as the imagery of the “one man” in verse 1, where the figure itself appears to carry interpretive weight.

The Final Verdict (v. 4)

- Verse 4 explains that this final verdict (“he shall be called holy”) will come about “When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem. . . .”
 - That is, a judgment first, a verdict second.
 - The washing of “the filth of the daughters of Zion” is largely the topic of Isaiah 5.
- This washing comes, “by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”
 - Why “the spirit of. . .” rather than just “judgment and burning”?
 - John the Baptist spoke of the One coming who would “baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).
 - Perhaps “spirit of judgment” and “spirit of burning” have a closer relation to the work of the Holy Spirit than we first recognize, though that should probably be framed as theological correspondence rather than strict identification.

A Spectacular Glory (v. 5)

- Not only the Temple, but upon “every dwelling place of mount Zion” the LORD will place “a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.”
- While often neglected in prophetic teaching, this spectacular glory will cause Jerusalem to be the “shining city.”
 - Isaiah 60:1-3
 - Zechariah 2:5 — compare to “upon all the glory shall be a defence.”
 - 37:27, Psalm 27:5, Isaiah 25:4.
- We do not often think of “daytime heat” and the need for shelter from storms during the millennial kingdom, but this verse speaks of both.
- Other passages speak of the same:
 - Isaiah 49:10
 - Isaiah 25:4-5
 - Ezekiel 34:26
 - Zechariah 14:17
 - Revelation 7:15-16 stands as a virtual parallel.

The Tabernacle (v. 6)

- The future “tabernacle” is a promised place of restoration and refuge: Amos 9:11, Ezekiel
- protection from heat.