

Chapter one gave us an introduction to the deplorable spiritual condition of Judah. Chapter two set before them the glorious future when the Messiah would reign. The rest of chapter two and three predict that the people of Judah will have to go into captivity in order to purge out their idolatry and rebellion against God. Then like a book end opposite the beginning of chapter two, we have another glimpse of the glorious future. That future is in stark contrasting images from the preceding passage. The women had placed their pride in physical beauty. God is about to describe true beauty. Judah was going to reap the fruit of their sinful deeds. God is going to declare a different fruit of the land, His fruit. They were filthy and stained with blood, but they are to be washed clean. God's protective hand was being lifted, but it will return in an even more glorious way.

Like the prophecy in chapter two, chapter four has multiple fulfillments. We can see that in how the terms are used later in Isaiah. ² *In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.* Isaiah 4:2 That day refers back to the Day of the LORD (2:12; 3:18). It is a day of judgment, a day of reckoning. However, for the righteous, it will be a glorious day! If Jesus has borne the judgment on your sins, then it will be a welcome day, a day to look for each and every day. If you will pay for your own sins, it will be a day in which you look for a hole in the ground to try to hide from the eyes of the glorious One.

The word "branch" is used in two different ways. Remember, this is end time poetry and the prophet is using metaphors. The branch he is referring to can be the Branch of Jesse, who is identified as the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1), or it can be the remnant that turn to the Lord (Isaiah 60:21). Since the Branch is the pride of the survivors, it must be a reference to the Messiah. Jeremiah and Zechariah have several passages in which they refer to the Messiah as a Branch raised up for David (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8).

We can read the passage as saying that on the Day of the LORD, the Messiah, Jesus, shall be beautiful and glorious. He will come the second time in the splendor of His unveiled glory. For the redeemed it will be the beautiful sight we have longed to see (Zechariah 9:17). For those in rebellion it will be terror and dread (Matthew 24:30).

To some extent this was fulfilled in the first coming. Jesus manifested the glory of the Father in His teaching of truth, miraculous healing, deliverance from evil spirits, and especially in His atoning death for us (John 1:14; 2:11). He judged the religious leaders and cleaned the Temple courts. Within a generation the old system was demolished by

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 2:12 (ESV)

¹² For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;

Commented [PW2]: Isaiah 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents;

Commented [PW3]: Isaiah 11:1 (ESV)

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Commented [PW4]: Isaiah 60:21 (ESV)

²¹ Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

Commented [PW5]: Jeremiah 23:5 (ESV)

⁵ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Commented [PW6]: Jeremiah 33:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Commented [PW7]: Zechariah 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.

Commented [PW8]: Zechariah 9:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.

Commented [PW9]: Matthew 24:30 (ESV)

³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Commented [PW10]: John 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Commented [PW11]: John 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

the Romans. It was not in a 24 hour day, but it was a time in which God was manifest in Israel, and people had to decide if they were for or against Him.

The second half of the verse is: *the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel*. I agree with commentator Edward Young and others that this is not to be read literally but continues with the same metaphor, calling the Messiah the fruit of the land. The land and the people are the inheritance God gave to Abraham. This is emphasizing the human side of Jesus' lineage. Jesse, a descendent of Abraham, is the stump from whom came the branch. Jesse's son David is the king who received the promise that God would give him a descendant who would reign forever. Both the Branch and the Fruit are called glorious. Both should be capitalized. We could hardly compare our Savior with bananas and grapefruit. It is Jesus who will be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. The descendants of the ones who survived the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions would see the glorious One, Jesus, and many of them would witness His mighty acts. Those who accepted Him as Messiah saw Him as their pride and honor.

We who are redeemed certainly see Him as our pride and honor. Our value is found in the love of God that redeemed us and is preparing us for eternity with Him. What could we possibly boast in that would be greater than that? What greater honor could any human have? **Is He your pride and honor? Does it show? Do others know He is your delight?**

The ultimate fulfillment may be when the 144,000 see Jesus coming at the end of the tribulation. Their long awaited King will have come to reign on David's throne for a thousand years. Those Jews who survive the tribulation will look on Him Whom they have pierced and mourn as one mourns for their only child (Zechariah 12:10). It will be a heartfelt repentance. He will be their pride and honor. This interpretation flows into the next verse.

³ *And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem*, This could not have been the case after the Babylonian invasion, for those left in the land rebelled against the word of the Lord from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 42:18-19). In some sense it could be applied to those who returned. Ultimately it must be applicable to those Jews who have turned to the LORD at the end the tribulation and accepted Jesus as their Messiah, Lord and Savior. This is surely what the Apostle Paul was referring to in Romans 11 when he declared that all Israel would be saved (Romans 11:26), though his actual proof text was Isaiah 59.
²⁰ *"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD.* ^{21a} *"And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD* Isaiah 59:20-21a Paul adds, "when I take away their sins" from Isaiah 27:9.

The only way they can be redeemed, saved, and sanctified is by the atoning death of Jesus, their Messiah. The veil over their eyes will be lifted in a time of tragedy, called

Commented [PW12]: Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

Commented [PW13]: Jeremiah 42:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: As my anger and my wrath were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so my wrath will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You shall become an execration, a horror, a curse, and a taunt. You shall see this place no more.

¹⁹ The LORD has said to you, O remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Know for a certainty that I have warned you this day

Commented [PW14]: Romans 11:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";

²⁷ "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Commented [PW15]: Isaiah 27:9 (ESV)

⁹ Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing.

“Jacob’s trouble,” and they will accept Jesus as their Savior (Zechariah 13:1). That is the only way that everyone who remains could be holy and recorded in the Book of Life. Everyone who has accepted Jesus as their Savior is considered holy and written in that book. If you know Him as your Lord, your name is there too.

Isaiah is predicting the fulfillment of His own prophecy in chapter one verse 27. *27 Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.* It is the righteousness of Jesus that redeems them, not their own. Justice had to be served and it was ultimately meted out on the cross. It would be the sacrifice of Jesus that would make their repentance acceptable to God. Through repentance and trust in God to provide for their sins, they would receive the righteousness of Jesus. All our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Our righteousness is of Him (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Isaiah 1:27 contains the basics requirements of salvation. There has to be justice. There has to be repentance. Those who repent are redeemed. They have the righteousness of Christ. The only factor missing is the means of that justice being meted out, which as the apostle Paul says, was still a mystery in Isaiah’s day (Ephesians 3:4-6). Though it was clearly predicted by the prophets, they could not understand how it would come about.

The next verse tells us how this will happen. *4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.* The immediate partial fulfillment would be the repentance the people would express when Jerusalem went into captivity. Then they would be forced to face the fact that it was their sins that had brought about the very thing that God had said would happen through the mouth of Moses (Deuteronomy 28:15). God had spoken in the previous chapters accusing them of shedding blood. The psalmist wrote that they sacrificed their innocent children to gods of the Canaanites (Psalm 106:38). That guilt would be taken away.

The spirit of judgment upon Jerusalem would be the wakeup call to repent and turn back to God. It did not happen all at once. God gave them numerous chances to turn. First it was the nation of Syria. Then it was Assyria. The final blow came from Babylon. We can see the grace of God with warning after warning. After all, Judah would see the northern tribes fall because of idolatry. They had an example right before their eyes, but they would not turn. God rescued them from Syria and Assyria by miraculous means, but they would not give Him the glory due His name.

God seems to follow similar patterns throughout history. That is because His love and mercy are unchanging. He warns and then warns again. He pleads through those who deliver His Word. But when people pass a point of no return, when repentance would only last until the threat was lifted, judgment must eventually come. Are we approaching this point in our nation?

Commented [PW16]: Zechariah 13:1 (ESV)

¹ “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

Commented [PW17]: Isaiah 64:6 (ESV)

⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Commented [PW18]: 1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV)

³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

Commented [PW19]: Ephesians 3:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,

⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Commented [PW20]: Deuteronomy 28:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ “But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

Judgment and the removal of all they trusted in was the only way to bring true repentance of those who would turn. **If we keep turning back to the things of the world when the danger passes, God will do what must be done for our sake.** He will take away our filth by a spirit of judgment and burning. Let us not harden ourselves to that extent. Let us be repentant and continue to place our trust and hope in Jesus and not on the temporal things of this passing world. We thank God for His blessings and provision but we must never let things become our security or come between us and God. That is to turn them into idols.

In Isaiah we are seeing God speak to a nation that was His chosen people. That does not mean they were redeemed. Paul tells us only a remnant is saved and that is consistent with the words of the prophets (Romans 9:27). The vast majority were in rebellion toward God.

God deals with nations in a similar way that He deals with individuals. While the message is addressed to the nation of Judah, it applies to individual lives. As the redeemed of the Lord, **we should be checking to see if there is any area in our own life where we are compromising in similar ways.**

John the Baptist said the one who would come after him would baptize with the Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11). The Spirit convicts of sin and the fire of the Lord is His purging our hearts of sinful ways. He purifies our inner thoughts and outward actions as we grow in Christ. The spirit of burning is the cleansing of fire. In the Old Testament, spoils of war were to be sanctified by fire (Numbers 31:23). Israel did not know it, but it was a way of not bringing disease back to their homes. The fire of the Holy Spirit purges our lives of the disease of sin.

Judah was about to be purged by the burning of everything they took pride in and trusted. That is what the Spirit of God does in the mind and actions of those who come to Jesus and let the Holy Spirit have His way in them. The Spirit of judgment and burning works in us too, if we will allow it. If we want to walk with the Lord we need to let Him cleanse our life with that fire.

⁵ Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. This is reminiscent of how the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21). There is no record of this happening upon the return from captivity in a literal way, so again we see Isaiah speaking in a figurative form explained in the next verse (Isaiah 25:4). The pillar of cloud and fire represented the LORD'S presence in their midst leading, protecting, and watching over them throughout their miraculous journey.

Upon the captives return, we can read in Ezra and Nehemiah how God miraculously gave them favor of the king, supplied their building materials, protected them from

Commented [PW21]: Romans 9:27 (ESV)

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

Commented [PW22]: Matthew 3:11 (ESV)

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Commented [PW23]: Numbers 31:23 (ESV)

²³ everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless, it shall also be purified with the water for impurity. And whatever cannot stand the fire, you shall pass through the water.

Commented [PW24]: Matthew 3:11 (ESV)

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Commented [PW25]: Isaiah 25:4 (ESV)

⁴ For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,

their enemies, and even guiding them to repentance as they restored the city walls and the Temple.

In New Jerusalem there may be a literal fulfillment of this passage. We can only guess. More important than any literal fulfillment is what the pillar of cloud represents (Revelation 7:15). The canopy over us is a wedding canopy. It is ultimately fulfilled in us becoming the bride of Christ. It is the loving presence of Jesus with us throughout eternity. It is joy unceasing and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

6 There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain. The presence of the LORD in their midst would be the shelter and refuge they needed from the storms of life. We see the partial initial fulfillment upon the return to Jerusalem. Then we see the fulfillment in Jesus during His three years of ministry. Jesus demonstrated this in a physical way by calming the storm on Galilee (Mark 4:39) and in guarding His disciples spiritually (John 17:12). In the Exodus, the LORD was said to be in the pillar of cloud (Exodus 14:24). Jesus was the pillar of cloud in the Old Testament and took on human form in the New. In the Millennial Kingdom and forever He will again be physically present with us, our shelter and refuge.

Chapter two and four and the closing chapters of Isaiah give us this wonderful picture of the coming kingdom. It is surrounded by chapters of God's declaration of our sinful nature and the justice we deserve. Isaiah's prophecies predict the coming of the Suffering Servant who will come and provide the justice that takes us from being children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), to becoming children of God with the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is no wonder then that after the captivity Isaiah became one of the favorite books of the Jews and quoted so often.

Isaiah is setting before the people of Judah the devastating result of their choices, but also the glorious plan of God to redeem them through it all. The Spirit sets the same before us. Is He your pride and honor? Is your life focused on Him, or on the things of this world? Let us not be as foolish as the people of Judah, neglecting God's warnings and going our own way. Let us choose the Lordship of Jesus and live for Him today. Amen?

Living with the beautiful Branch as your king is not a burden. He does the work through us. In fact, He is the one place we find our souls can rest. He is the canopy over us. When He is our King, we are in His Kingdom, and it is there we experience righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

Questions

- 1 Who is the Branch? The Fruit?
- 2 Is Jesus the pride and honor of your life? How is that seen?
- 3 What is the future fulfillment of vs 2-3?
- 4 How could the people be holy?

Commented [PW26]: Revelation 7:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

Commented [PW27]: 1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Commented [PW28]: Mark 4:39 (ESV)

³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Commented [PW29]: John 17:12 (ESV)

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Commented [PW30]: Exodus 14:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic,

Commented [PW31]: Ephesians 2:3 (ESV)

³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Commented [PW32]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Commented [PW33]: Romans 14:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

- 5 How is 1:27 the Gospel?
- 6 What was required to cleanse them?
- 7 How can it be applied to us?
- 8 When is judgment inevitable?
- 9 What does the cloud represent?
- 10 What are the three fulfillments of verse six?