

# Isaiah 4 & 5

- Verse 1
  - Finishes up the judgment pronounced in chapter 3
  - Probably a bad chapter division
  - Men will be in short supply because of the devastation
  - Women will pursue them in great competition
- Verse 2
  - In spite of the coming severe judgment, divine blessing would eventually come.
  - Sometimes the phrase in that day refers to the Babylonian attack on Jerusalem, but here it means the millennial reign of Christ.
  - The “Branch” is a reference to the Messiah
    - Jeremiah 23:5 NKJV  
**"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.**
    - Jeremiah 33:15 NKJV  
**'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.**
    - Zechariah 3:8 NKJV  
**'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.**
      - The term “Branch” is a fitting figure for the Messiah because He “sprouted” from David’s line (Jer. 33:15) and will bear fruit.
      - Just as people delight in fruit from their land so the survivors will delight in the Messiah
- Verses 3-4
  - The mark of distinction for surviving Israel will be holiness, not wealth or prestige.
  - Their sins will be forgiven.
  - Speaking again of the women of Zion (cf. 3:16–4:1) Isaiah noted that they, representing the nation, will be cleansed by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire, as the judging will be like fire that will burn away the nation’s undesirable filth (sin).

- Only the sovereign work of the Lord, not human effort, will be able to cleanse (cf. 1:25) the nation (cf. Zech. 13:1).
  - John the Baptist said that Jesus would “baptize ... with fire” (Matt. 3:11), that is, purify the nation by an act of judging (cf. Mal. 3:2–5).
- (Verses 5-6)
  - In this yet-future time of blessing for redeemed Israel the glory of God will be evident in Jerusalem (Mount Zion).
    - As God’s glory was visible to Israel in the Exodus from Egypt in a cloud ... by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21–22; 40:34–38; cf. 16:10),
    - so also will His glory be visible when the redeemed nation will be in her land of promise. God’s glory, like a tent, will provide safety and peace.

## Chapter 5

- Verses 1-2
  - In his song Isaiah pictured his loved One (i.e., God), planting a vineyard on a fertile hillside
    - Removing the stones (of which there are many in Israel!)
    - And planting only the best vines.
  - He built a watchtower to guard the vineyard.
    - He made a winepress in anticipation of producing good wine.
    - However, only poor grapes grew on His vines.
- Verses 3-6
  - The words in these verses in the song are “spoken” by God.
    - He asked the people of Judah to judge the situation.
    - They were to tell whether the bad grapes were the fault of the vineyard Owner.
  - Though God could have done nothing more to make the vineyard productive (v. 4) there was one thing He would now do:
    - He would let it be destroyed (vv. 5–6).
    - By removing the protective hedge ... its wall (probably of stone) around it
    - He would allow animals to enter and destroy it.
  - Without cultivating the vines, thornbushes would grow up and smother them.
  - Nor would God let rain fall on the vineyard.
  - Because of the nation’s sinful actions (their bad fruit), destruction would come.

- Without God's protection Judah would be ruined.
- Verse 7
  - The vineyard in this song is identified as Israel and Judah.
  - God wanted good fruit, that is, justice and righteousness (cf. comments on Isa. 1:21).
  - Instead He saw only bloodshed (cf. 1:15) and heard cries of distress.
  - Because of its "bad grapes" (injustice) most people would be killed or taken into captivity.
- Verses 8-10
  - Each of the six indictments is introduced by Woe.
  - Some people were acquiring much land at the expense of their fellow countrymen (cf. Micah 2:1–2).
    - Selling houses permanently in a walled city was allowed under the Law, but selling houses in unwalled cities and fields was allowed only until the Year of Jubilee when the houses would revert back to their former owners.
    - Because God had given the people the land they were not to get rich at others' expense.
    - Because of this sin the big houses and mansions the people once enjoyed would be empty, for many people would be killed
      - Their crops would fail.
      - Normally a large vineyard would produce many gallons of wine, but here the amount would be a mere six gallons (a bath).
      - Six bushels (a homer) of seed would normally yield scores of bushels of grain, but ironically the grain would be only one-half a bushel (an ephah), just 1/12 the amount of seed sown!
- Verses 11-12
  - Apparently heavy consumption of wine was prevalent in Isaiah's day for this sin is mentioned in two of the six woes (cf. v. 22).
    - People were so addicted to wine that, unlike most drunkards, they rose early in the morning to drink.
    - They also stayed up late at night.
  - In their revelry they enjoyed music at their banquets, but cared nothing for the deeds of the LORD.
    - Their lack of respect for the work of His hands meant they abused other people made in the image of God.
    - Caring only for their own pleasures, they had no concern for the Lord or for others.

- Verses 13-17
  - Because of Judah's lifestyle she would experience several results, the worst being exile.
  - Included in that experience would be:
    - Death by hunger and thirst (v. 13).
    - Many would die, both nobles and masses, since death has no respect for rank (v. 14).
    - The carousing drunkards (brawlers and revelers) of whom Isaiah had just spoken (vv. 11–12) would also die (v. 14).
  - All proud people would be humiliated regardless of their previous stations in life (5:15).
  - With the houses of the wealthy ruined (cf. vv. 8–9) and desolate, lambs would easily graze there (v. 17).
  - This destruction of the nation would lead to a display of God's justice and holiness (v. 16).
    - This does not mean that He delights in revenge.
    - Rather, He keeps His word as spoken in the covenant.
    - His discipline of the nation would show that He still loved her and would someday bring her back into a favored position.
- Verses 18–19
  - Perhaps Isaiah referred here to people who were genuinely questioning whether God was in control of the nation.
    - Though attached to sin and wickedness by cords and ropes (i.e., deeply involved in sin) they wondered if God could save their nation.
    - Apparently they wanted God to deliver them even though they did not want to give up their sinful practices.
  - They wanted to see God act (let Him hasten His work) without any spiritual change on their part.
    - However, deliverance, both personal and national, does not work that way.
    - A spiritual change must be made before God will save His people from destruction.
- Verse 20
  - Some people lead others astray by their perverted values.
    - Evil—for example, adultery, idolatry, materialism, murder, and many other sins forbidden in the Scriptures—is often held up as being good.
    - Those who say such things are under the threat (woe) of God's judgment.

- Verse 21
  - Thinking themselves wise and clever, some people were not relying on God's power to deliver the nation.
  - They thought they could protect themselves.
- Verses 22–23
  - Rather than being heroes and good government authorities, many leaders were known for their heavy drinking.
  - They were ready to be bribed, not caring for the people they were ruling.
  - They were more concerned for their own pleasure than for the rights of the innocent. Therefore they (those leaders) would be judged.
- Verses 24–30
  - (vv 24-25) These people Isaiah had been writing about would be burned like straw and dry grass and their flowers blown away like dust.
    - This was because they had deliberately disobeyed God's Word
    - Because of the LORD'S anger many would die in the streets of Jerusalem.
    - His raised hand (cf. 14:27) suggests His executing punishment
    - The mountains shaking from an earthquake speaks of His awesome presence (cf. Ex. 19:18)
  - (vv 27-30) When God's judgment would come on Judah, the nations of Egypt and Assyria (7:18), and later Babylon would respond as if God had raised a banner as a signal for war.
    - Those nations would seemingly come from the ends of the earth
    - The soldiers, responding speedily, would be vigorous (5:27) and well armed.
    - Their chariots would be fast (v. 28).
    - Ferocious like lions (v. 29) they would completely devastate Judah (v. 30).
    - They would cover Judah like a sea and blot out the sun like the clouds, a picture of distress and gloom.

John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1041–1042.