

Session 2 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 3-4

I. REVIEW AND OVERVIEW (ISA. 2-4)

- A. Isaiah prophesied about God's glory in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-5), then described Jerusalem in his day (2:6-4:1) having negative spiritual (2:6-11) and social conditions (3:1-23) resulting in the "Day of the Lord" judgments (2:12-22; 3:24-4:1). God's glory will be openly manifested in Jerusalem when Jesus returns (4:2-6). Israel will fulfill her destiny in 2:2-4 after she is disciplined in 2:6-4:1 and purified in 4:2-6. The Lord revealed His glorious purpose to Israel to motivate them to obey Him.
- B. The themes in Isaiah 2-4 include *God's salvation* and *judgment* of Israel at the end of the age. These were partially fulfilled when God disciplined Israel through the Assyrian invasion (721 BC) and the Babylon captivity (606-536 BC), followed by a period of restoration in 536 BC under Zerubbabel.
- C. **Premise:** What occurred in these periods will be surpassed in the end times in terms of the intensity of man's sin and God's judgment in both Israel and Gentile nations (Dan. 8:23; 12:1, 7; Mt 24:21).
²¹For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. (Mt. 24:21)
- D. Jerusalem in the past is a picture that gives understanding of how God will deal with Israel and the nations in the end times. Many prophecies have a double fulfillment or two stages of fulfillment.
- E. Throughout Isaiah 2:6-4:1, there is an interplay between the judgment on Israel by Assyria and/or Babylon and the judgment on Israel and the Gentile nations in the Great Tribulation.
1. Judah's conflict with the Assyrian Empire is the historical context to some of the conflicts and judgments set forth in Isaiah 1-37, especially related to the sin of King Ahaz (2 Chr. 28).
 2. Israel's sin was in her attitude and actions toward Assyria and Babylonia, the great civilizations of that day. Her desire for security and wealth led her to imitate, assimilate, and trust in ungodly nations (Syria, Assyria, Babylon, etc.). This parallels the attitudes and actions that will lead Israel and the nations to reject the Lord and embrace Harlot Babylon systems (Rev. 17-18).
- F. Isaiah spoke to his generation (2:6-9) and to the end-time generation—day of the Lord (2:12-21).
¹²The day of the LORD...shall come upon everything proud...¹⁹They shall go into...caves... [to hide] from the terror of the LORD...when He arises to shake the earth mightily... (Isa. 2:12, 19)
- G. In the final generation of natural history, the Lord will arise to shake the earth mightily (Heb. 12:26-27; cf. Isa. 2:10, 19, 21; 13:13; 29:6; Ezek. 38:19; Hag. 2:6, 21; Zech. 14:4-5; Mt. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 21:11; Heb. 12:26-27; Rev. 6:12-14; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18-20).
²⁶...He has promised, saying, "...I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." (Heb. 12:26)

II. ISAIAH 3: A WINDOW INTO THE SIN AND JUDGMENT AT THE END OF THE AGE

- A. The judgments on Israel in Isaiah 3 were partially fulfilled when God disciplined Israel through the Assyrian invasion (721 BC) and the Babylon captivity (606-536 BC). These periods of sin and judgment are “windows” into the sin and judgment of Israel and the Gentiles in the end times.
- B. Isaiah 3:1-9 prophesied the removal of Jerusalem’s food supply and its leadership (3:1-3) and the breakdown of their social order due to incompetent leaders (3:4-7). Some of this occurred after Hezekiah revolted against Assyria in 701 BC and in context to the invasion of Babylon in 586 BC.
- ¹For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem...the whole supply of bread...²The mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet...and the elder...⁴I will give children...to rule over them. ⁵The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder... (Isa. 3:1-5)***
- C. Isaiah 3:1-4:6 prophesies the fate of Jerusalem in context to the “day of the Lord” judgments. Isaiah 3 is connected to 2:22 by the explanatory “for” in 3:1 and the “day of Lord” theme (2:12-21) that is often stated simply as “in that day” (2:11, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1, 2).
- D. The root cause of their social chaos and divine judgment is their bold and shameless words and deeds against the Lord, provoking Him with their blatant sin done even in the public square (3:8-9).
- ⁸For Jerusalem stumbled...because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD...⁹and they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it...¹³The LORD stands up to plead, and stands to judge the people. ¹⁴The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders of His people... (Isa. 3:8-14)***
- E. Isaiah prophesied God’s judgment on the rebellious, arrogant women in Jerusalem (3:16-4:1). He pictured them as losing their *beauty* (mentioning 21 personal adornments in 3:18-23), *privileges* (identifying five in 3:24), and their *male family members* (by death in context to war; 3:25) thus losing the providers and defenders. The “daughters” personified both men and women in Jerusalem.
- ¹⁶...“Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with...wanton eyes...¹⁸In that day the Lord will take away the finery [their beauty]...²⁵Your men shall fall by the sword [war]...^{4:1}And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach.” (Isa. 3:16-4:1)***
- ¹⁵to execute judgment on...all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 15)***
- F. Isaiah 4:1 describes the most graphic aspect of the coming judgment—a war resulting in an unprecedented death toll of men so that the ratio of women to men would be 7 to 1.
- G. So many men would die that women would be desperate for male companionship and support. The judgments were enacted by the Assyrians and Babylonians, but the phrase “in that day” anticipates the Great Tribulation which includes God’s end-time judgment on Israel and the nations.

III. JESUS’ BEAUTY WILL BE OPENLY MANIFESTED IN JERUSALEM (ISA. 4:2-6)

- A. Isaiah 2:1-4:6 is one unit of Scripture that begins with a hopeful promise of God's glory being manifested in Jerusalem (2:2-5), followed by the "day of the Lord" end-time judgments that were partially fulfilled in ancient Israel (2:6-4:1), and ending with another promise of God's glory being manifest in Jerusalem in a great way (4:2-6).
1. There are significant differences between these two salvation oracles in this biblical unit. Isaiah 2 highlights the coming of the Gentile nations to Jerusalem to learn God's ways (2:1-5). Isaiah 4 focuses on Jesus' beauty being seen as He purifies a remnant in Jerusalem (4:2-6).
 2. These promises were made to the people of Jerusalem to help them choose between exalting themselves or exalting God. An increasing measure of the kingdom trends in 4:2-6 are being manifested in this age, leading to fullness in millennial kingdom.
- B. The beauty of Jesus will be displayed in His Person and leadership in the end times (Isa. 4:2).
- ²In that day the Branch of the LORD [Messiah] shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth [vegetation] shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped. (Isa. 4:2)***
1. ***In that day***: This is the 7th time this phrase occurs in this section from 2:1-4:6 (2:11, 12, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1, 2). These phrases (3:18; 4:1, 2) speak to the same time frame in the generation the Lord returns when judgment and salvation come to earth in an unprecedented measure.
 2. ***Branch of the Lord***: This title speaks of Jesus (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Ezek. 17:22-24; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). As the Branch, Jesus is *the Lord* (Isa. 4:2), *a king* (Jer. 23:5-6), *a servant* (Zech. 3:8), and *a Man* (Zech. 6:12). This parallels the fourfold picture of Jesus in the gospels.
 3. Jesus the Branch shall branch out progressively (Zech. 6:12). His government and peace shall increase forever as He orders and establishes His kingdom (Isa. 9:7).
- ¹²... Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out... (Zech. 6:12)***
- ⁷Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end... to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (Isa. 9:7)***
- C. ***Fruit of the earth***: Under Jesus' leadership, the land will be abundantly productive in contrast to the famine (3:1, 7; Rev. 6:5-6). The fruit of the land is an important aspect of prophetic Scriptures related to Israel (Isa. 60:13; 61:11; Ezek. 34:25-27; Hos. 3:21-22; Amos 9:13-14). It is in contrast to the long years of war and famine that Israel experienced in the years following Isaiah's prophecy.
1. The Scripture promises that the land of Israel will be like the garden of Eden after Jesus returns to rule in Jerusalem (Isa. 35:1-8; 51:3; Ezek. 34:29; 36:35; 47:6-12).
 2. Ezekiel speaks of the land as distinguished from the nations by its glory (Ezek. 20:6, 15).

IV. THE BEAUTY OF JESUS—IN HIS PERSON AND LEADERSHIP (ISA. 4:2)

- A. The beauty of the King will be seen in His Person and leadership (4:2). Isaiah emphasized that the *beauty of the Messiah* would be seen in context to His end-time leadership (4:2; 28:5; 33:17).
¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in His beauty... (Isa. 33:17)
⁵In that day the LORD of hosts will be...a diadem of beauty to...His people... (Isa. 28:5)
⁶And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God...Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)
⁷...I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations [Jesus]... (Hag. 2:7)
- B. Psalm 45 is the Father's song about Jesus' beauty (Heb. 1:8). Jesus will be openly seen as the One more beautiful than all others in context to His activity when He destroys the Antichrist's armies as He approaches Jerusalem at the end of the Armageddon campaign (Ps. 45:3-5; Rev. 19:11-21). The Father commissioned Jesus to gird His sword to remove the wicked kings of the earth (45:3).
***¹My heart is overflowing...I recite my composition concerning the King [Jesus]...²You are fairer [more beautiful] than the sons of men...³Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One...
⁴In Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness...⁵Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples [nations] fall under You. (Ps. 45:1-5)***
- C. Jesus' second coming will be in context to a military conflict around Jerusalem. His plan is to replace the evil leadership of the earth in one hour and establish a new world order.
¹⁹The kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered to make war against Him [Jesus]...²⁰The Beast [Antichrist] was...cast alive into the lake of fire...²¹The rest were killed with the sword... (Rev. 19:19-21)
- D. The biblical end-time storyline is about the glory of Jesus and His plan to transition the earth to the age to come. It is not a doomsday prophecy about the end of the world, but a glorious love story of Jesus ushering in a new world order.
- E. It describes the *end* of the dark night of Satan's oppression of the human race and the *dawning* of Jesus' new day as He returns to rule all nations with His people, to destroy the Antichrist's empire, remove sin from the planet, and fill it with God's glory.
- F. When we understand the end times in the way God intended, we see the beauty of Jesus' leadership. Seeing the biblical "beauty narrative" is a litmus test for interpreting the 150 chapters rightly.
1. When we do not see beauty in the biblical end-time narrative, it means we have the wrong perspective.
 2. If we think mostly of doom or gloom, we must allow the Spirit to help us re-align our perspective.

V. THE BEAUTY OF JESUS—SEEN IN RESCUING THE REMNANT (ISA. 4:3)

- A. The beauty of the King will be seen in how He rescues the remnant of Israel (Isa. 4:3).
²...for those of Israel who have escaped. ³And...he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. (Isa. 4:2-3)
- B. **Escaped:** Isaiah introduces what I refer to as the resisters (4:2-3)—the unsaved survivors (Jews and Gentiles) of the Great Tribulation who refused to worship the Antichrist. The Scripture refers to them as “those who are left” or “who remain” (Isa. 4:3; 10:20; 11:11, 16; 49:6; 65:8; 66:19; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 20:38-42; 36:36; 39:9-10; Dan. 12:1; Amos 9:9-10; Joel 2:32; Zech. 9:7; 12:14; 13:8; 14: 16). They will have an opportunity to be converted after Jesus returns and then populate the millennial earth.
- C. **Zion:** Zion and Jerusalem are used throughout Isaiah as synonyms (Isa. 2:3; 4:3-4; 31:4-5, 9; 33:20; 40:9; 41:27; 52:1; 64:10, etc.). Zion is the mountain, and Jerusalem is the city in proximity to it.
- D. **Holy:** An unholy people will become holy to show the strength of God’s grace and mercy. They will become holy by partaking of the beauty freely imparted to them by Jesus (Isa. 61:3). His purpose for judgment is salvation. The message is that no one is hopeless or out of the reach of radical transformation.
- E. **Recorded:** The book contains the names of persons chosen by God to survive the Great Tribulation. Daniel referred to a book with the names of those who would survive in the end times (Dan. 12:1). To survive the calamity is no accident, but it is according to God’s sovereign purpose.

VI. THE BEAUTY OF JESUS—SEEN IN PURIFYING THE PEOPLE AND THE CITY (ISA. 4:4)

- A. The beauty of the King will be seen in how He purifies the people and city of Jerusalem (Isa. 4:4).
⁴When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning... (Isa. 4:4)
1. **Washed away the filth:** One purpose of the Great Tribulation judgments is to wash away the filth of the nations and daughters of Zion (3:16-17). The apostle John spoke of Jerusalem as a “great city” because of its prophetic destiny, but when Jesus rescues it at His return, Jerusalem is called *Sodom* because of its perversion and *Egypt* because of its oppression (Rev. 11:8).
⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city [Jerusalem] which spiritually is called Sodom [perversion] and Egypt [oppression], where also our Lord was crucified. (Rev. 11:8)
2. **Purged the blood:** The Lord will cleanse Jerusalem of blood guilt and demonic spirits.
*¹In that day a fountain shall be opened for...Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.
²...I will also cause... the unclean spirit to depart from the land. (Zech. 13:1-2)*

3. **The spirit of judgment:** The Lord cleanses by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. The cleansing is done by the Spirit through a process referred to as “burning and judgment”—that is, cleansed “by a blast of burning” which destroys everything that is unclean (Isa 1:31).
- ³³And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame...³⁵Some of those of understanding shall fall [martyrdom], to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end... (Dan. 11:33-35)*
4. **Purged:** The blood spilled on the land includes the martyrs, the casualties of war, and the shedding of innocent blood—including how King Ahaz and King Manasseh burned children in the fires according to the abominations of the nations (2 Chr. 28:3; 2 Chr. 33:6).

VII. THE BEAUTY OF JESUS—SEEN IN THE CANOPY OVER THE CITY (ISA. 4:5-6)

- A. The beauty of the King will be seen in the canopy of His glory (Isa. 4:5). A canopy (Heb. *chuppah*) was commonly used in wedding ceremonies as a marriage chamber (Ps. 19:6; Joel 2:16). Here it is a declaration of the consummation of the covenant of marriage with full access to His presence.
- ⁵Then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering [wedding canopy]. (Isa. 4:5)*
- B. God led Israel in the days of Moses using a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night (Ex. 13:21)—it was a symbol of His presence, care, guidance, and commitment to be their God in covenant relationship. Jesus Himself will lead Israel and the nations in contrast to the failure of leadership in Isaiah’s day (3:2-7). The cloud covered the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34). The cloud was confined to the Holy of Holies. The time will come when it will appear over all of Mount Zion.
- ²¹And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. (Ex 13:21)*
- C. **Above:** The Lord will release His glory above every dwelling place and worship assembly in Mount Zion. Mount Zion will be a plain that is 40 miles in diameter, leveled and elevated (Zech. 14:10). God’s presence will not be limited to a building, but will be like a canopy over all Zion (Isa. 60:1-3). The New Jerusalem will come down to the earth (Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).
- ¹...and the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. ²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth... but the LORD will arise over you [Jerusalem], and His glory will be seen on you. ³The Gentiles [nations] shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isa. 60:1-3)*
- D. The beauty of the King will be seen in the comfort of the city (Isa. 4:6). Tabernacles or booths in the time of Moses served as a shelter to protect Israel from the elements—heat and rain.
- ⁶And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. (Isa. 4:6)*