

ISAIAH 4

THE BRANCH OF THE LORD

As we study the prophecies of Isaiah, we shall constantly notice the sudden manner in which the Lord passes from threatenings of wrath to promises of mercy. How strongly, for example, does this chapter contrast with that which immediately precedes it – even though they are both a part of the same sermon! At first sight, it might seem difficult to trace any connection between the two. But we must remember that God’s dealings always have two faces, so to speak – just like the pillar of Jehovah’s presence in Exodus 14:20, which was a cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, but a light to the Israelites. The very judgments which destroy the wicked also purify and brighten Christ’s Church.

The “day” that is spoken of in verse 1 is surely a reference to the Gospel-day. The event described here sounds very strange and unnatural, but we shall have a lovely view of its striking beauty if we read it in a spiritual sense. Jesus is the Husband of His beautiful and beloved Bride, the Church! And as the Church worldwide is made up of innumerable souls, the “seven women” who are here mentioned are a certain number that is put down to represent an uncountable multitude. When Jesus and His gracious salvation are revealed in the Gospel, every poor and awakened sinner who hears the joyful news shall lay hold of Jesus, praying to be called by His name. The eating of their own bread, and wearing their own apparel, is an allusion to how souls first approach Christ; at their initial coming, they are all tinctured with an idea of their need to *do* something to obtain their Savior’s favor. This explains the very first question of the Philippian jailor: “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) But after a longer acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, the soul is humbled; and the believer then knows that he or she can do nothing whatsoever for their salvation, for it is *all* done by Christ! How blessed it is to perceive Jesus in this sweet passage of Scripture! How effectually and fully the reproaches of sinners are removed, when their souls are brought into a marriage-relationship with Jesus! O the blessedness of calling him “the Lord our righteousness,” and of living with Him as our Husband – clothed with His justifying garment of complete salvation! (See chapter 54:5; Jer. 3:14; 23:6; Hos. 2:16- 20.)

Let us spend a little time considering the name given to the Savior in verse 2: “the Branch of the Lord!” Twice, in the prophecies of Zechariah, the same expression is used. “Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH” (Zech. 3:8). And, “Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord” (Zech. 6:12). Also,

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ A picture is given, representing a multitude of sinful souls coming to Christ – verse 1
- ❖ A promise of the restoration of Jerusalem’s peace, purity, righteousness, and safety in the days of the Messiah – verses 2-6

we see the same title used in Jeremiah 23:5: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper!” And again, in Jeremiah 33:15: “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” Isaiah himself also uses the expression in chapter 11:1, when he says, “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

The Lord Jesus, although He is the Son of God, is also truly the Son of man. He was not a separate plant from the rest of humanity; but rather, He was a Branch growing out of the great tree of human nature – and in particular, out of the stem of Jesse, and the family of David. But He was not like any other branch, for He was the Branch of the Lord! Unlike the other branches, He did not get His life from the tree in which He grew. The sap of the tree of humanity did indeed flow into Him. He shared human life and human nature, for He was a true Man. But besides this, He had Divine life in Himself; it did not come to Him from the human tree. In Numbers chapter 17, Aaron’s rod budded and blossomed and yielded nuts, even though it was far away from its parent stem. And in the same way, the Lord Jesus lived by His own life. He declared this, saying, “As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26).



During His earthly ministry, Jesus did not display all the energy and glory of this Divine life. He seemed to be like a root out of a dry ground, and there was no attractiveness in Him that would cause people to be drawn to Him (chapter 53:2). But in this passage, we are told that the day is coming when the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious! Do we wait to share the joy of that day? Then let us see to it that we are united to Christ *now*! We must be grafted into this living Branch. We must get all our strength and all our life from Him. We must dwell in Him, and He in us. Our life here on earth must be a life of union with Him. And then, when He comes in all His beauty and in all His glory, He will make us beautiful and glorious also; and He will cause us to share in the joy of His Kingdom! But in the meantime, His presence and His union with His people makes everything blessed. Indeed, He is all that we need. He is our glory and our defense, and He is our hiding-place from the heat and the storms of this world!

Lord Jesus, we beseech You to do as You have promised; be both a glory and a defense upon our families, our homes, our churches, and all Your redeemed children! Continually dwell in the midst of us; for then we shall indeed be the redeemed of the Lord, who dwell safely – in grace here, and in glory hereafter. Amen.