
Isaiah 4

A glorious vision opens this chapter, beginning with verse ISAIAH 4:2, showing forth *the Branch*, or our Savior and the focus of our joy and our confidence. In Isaiah we often meet an expression of Messiah spoken by the Lord, such as in ISAIAH 4:2, *The Branch of the LORD*. It should be known that the Lord Jehovah spoke, through the principle of Divine Investiture, the words of the Father. The time would come when only a remnant would be left in Jerusalem, and these individuals would be greatly esteemed by the Lord. This remnant will have been washed clean. Upon the holy temples would be manifested the ancient tokens of the presence of God: “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (Exodus 13:21).

1 ¶ AND in that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*

* JST: This verse is last verse in ISAIAH 3, see exegesis there.

Verse one is actually the last verse in ISAIAH 3, where we see the results of the scenes of horror found there. ISAIAH 4, in contrast, begins with a message of beauty, hope and glory.

2 ¶ In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious; ✓ and* the fruit of the earth [shall be] excellent and comely for to them that are escaped of Israel. ✓

- ✓ beauty and glory
- ✓ ✓ the escaping of Israel

* JST & KJV include “and,” while Book of Mormon deletes.

¶ *In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious.* Some translations capitalize¹ the word branch (בְּרִיךְ). For instance, “In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious” (NAS, see also NIV, EB, SOT, YLT) giving this passage a Messianic tone. The Targum (Ⓣ) has: “At that time shall the Messiah of the Lord be for joy and for glory.” So, how can it be the *Branch of the LORD*, since the Branch represents Messiah, and so does the Lord? In ISAIAH 53:6b, we read similarly, “and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The principle of *Divine Investiture* is at play, wherein the Savior speaks on

¹ Recall that in Hebrew there is no distinction between capital and lower case letters. They are all the same in this respect.

behalf of the Father. It is the Branch or Messiah that is being spoken of here. The contribution of the Targum (Ⓣ) is extremely significant, and shows that anciently the Jews believed in Messiah. The Jewish commentator Kimhi likewise translates as “The Messiah, the Son of David” (Kimhi, in Clarke). Today, while some Jews hold strong to their faith in *Messiah*, others have diluted their hope into a *Messianic Age*. The Book of Mormon shows a like occurrence; where before the coming of Christ many were not able to continue steadfast in their belief in Christ. In Jeremiah the figure is also contained of Messiah as the Branch: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jeremiah 23:5–8; see also 33:15). Likewise, we find “I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. ... In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree” (Zechariah 3:8b, 10; see also 6:12.). Other translations for ISAIAH 4:2 include, “In that day shall the glory of the Lord shine forth” (Syriac, Ⓢ) and “And in that day God shall shine gloriously in counsel on the earth” (LXX, Ⓞ). ¶ Then, will the Branch be *beautiful and glorious*. For the Branch to be *beautiful and glorious*, it means that the people will acknowledge the Lord as their Savior. So perhaps, one could say that the Branch will be *beautiful and glorious in the eyes of Israel*. Not that the beauty of the Branch had changed, rather, that the eyes of the people would be opened to see that beauty. ¶ *And the fruit of the earth shall be*

excellent and comely. Some translators continue with the Messianic message, by capitalizing Fruit: “And the Fruit of the Land splendid and majestic” (EB), “Even the most excellent and beautiful Fruit of the earth” (SOT). Lowth says: “The Branch is an appropriated title of the Messiah; and the fruit of the land means the great Person to spring from the house of Judah, and is only a parallel expression signifying the same; or perhaps the blessings consequent upon the redemption procured by him.” If we render the KJV with the modified capitalization, “And the Fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely,” the result is striking. In a Messianic allusion we read about the Christ, “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him” (ISAIAH 53:2b). So once again, we can infer that while the Savior had no beauty or comeliness to those who were in spiritual darkness, those who love the Lord will exclaim, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (ISAIAH 52:7). And from the Book of Mormon, “And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people; For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished” (Mosiah 15:18–19). Certainly my soul delighteth in the scriptures. ¶ Many scriptures have multiple fulfillments and so we can also read, from *Rain in Due Season*: “Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:4). So the fruit of the land would be excellent and plentiful. “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:11–12). Finally, in the Targum (Ⓢ)² we read, “and they that keep the law for majesty and for praise.” This speaks of the beauty to come upon the people who keep the commandments. ¶ *To them that are escaped of Israel*. This clause is a reference to the *remnant* of Jacob. Out of this remnant we have not only the Lamanites—who are descendants of Israel mostly through the tribe of Joseph and in the latter days would join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—but other remnants of Israel found throughout the world,

² Stenning.

such as those of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, as well as of the Lost Tribes. Slowly, descendants from all of the tribes are entering into the waters of baptism. And the day will come when a great number of the Lost Tribes will come into the Church and Ephraim will have the privilege of baptizing them (see D&C 133:26 ff.). At that day of rejoicing, it will be clear to Judah that they are not the only ones of Israel who are left upon the earth. The rejoicing of Joseph of Egypt when he saw his brothers, and all twelve were re-united, is a type and a shadow of future happy days alluded to in the following scriptures: “Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?” (ISAIAH 49:21). The same thought is contained in: “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD” (ISAIAH 54:1).

3 And it shall come to pass, **they** [~~that he that is~~] **are** left in Zion, and [~~he that~~] remaineth* in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, [**even**] every one that is written among the living[✓] in Jerusalem--

✓ or, to life

* Book of Mormon: remain

And it shall come to pass, they that are left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem. In speaking of a yet future remnant, perhaps those who are left when Jerusalem is being attacked from every side, in the end of days, when many will have already been destroyed and all are about to perish were it not for the Son of Man: “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the

LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (Zechariah 14:1–5). Those of Judah will recognize their redeemer at that time: “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends . . . And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein” (Zechariah 13:6, 8). A second fulfillment refers to the New Jerusalem and Zion in the American continent, as they are becoming purified to receive the City of Enoch. Regarding this second signification, it is already beginning to be fulfilled with the gathering of children of Jacob into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ¶ *Shall be called holy*. At that time, those who are left, will turn to the Lord and be called holy, קְדוֹשׁ. It is Christ who shares His holiness with His disciples. ¶ *Even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem*. The words *everyone that is written* also seem to point to those spoken of in the Book of Revelation, who are written in Book of Life. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Revelation 3:5). Ibn Ezra feels that the words “*that is written*” refer to the certainty of their being fulfilled.³ At the time that Christ visited the ancient inhabitants of the Americas, after His resurrection, the Book of Mormon paints a similar scene, where the most righteous survived the cataclysmic events.

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion. In speaking of pride we read: “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up” (Proverbs 30:12–13). And what is the filthiness spoken of here? Pride and neglect of the poor: “There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men” (Proverbs 30:14). In term of what constitutes the filth of sin, we read, “And

³ Friedländer, M. *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah: Edited from MMS. And translated, with notes, introduction, and indexes*. Volume I. Translation of the commentary, Philipp Feldheim, Inc. The House of the Jewish Book: New York, also published in London and Jerusalem. 1983, p. 25, Note 3.

finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them” (Mosiah 4:29). Man, of himself, cannot remove the least of his sins and iniquities. “For though thou wash thee with nitre,⁴ and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD” (Jeremiah 2:22). The Savior admonished: “And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end. Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:19–20). It is through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, then, that the filth of our sins can be washed away, as we repent, are baptized in His name, and are purified by the influence of the Holy Ghost throughout the remainder of our days. The Lord is the *fountain of living waters* (Jeremiah 17:13). ¶ *And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof*. The cleansing action continues: “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, *It is my people*: and they shall say, The LORD *is my God*” (Zechariah 13:9, emphasis added). ¶ *By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning*. How shall people be purified and their sins purged? Here is a scripture that indicates what would happen in the latter-days. “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Malachi 3:2–4). The question is also asked, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (ISAIAH 33:14b). The fire will either consume or purify us, depending on whether we have chosen or rejected the *plan of happiness* (Alma 42:16).

⁴ Regarding the Hebrew word for “niter,” pronounced *neter* in Hebrew, נִתְרָה, it corresponds to a heavy cleansing agent, sometimes translated as *lye* or as *potash*. The ASV translates it as: “For though thou wash thee with lye, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord Jehovah.”

5 And the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon [✓] all the glory of Zion [shall be] a defence. ^{✓ ✓}

✓ or, above

✓ ✓ covering

ISAIAH 4:5–6 was among the scriptures that Angel Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith according to the Oliver Cowdery narrative (see note to ISAIAH 1:7). These verses speak, at least in part, to the building of Holy Temples throughout the world, for a place of refuge and for a covering from both physical and spiritual storm and rain. Elder Orson Pratt felt these verses referred to the Tabernacle that would serve for protection from the elements. He went on to add that in a future date: “The time is to come when God will meet with all the congregation of his Saints, and to show his approval, and that he does love them, he will work a miracle by covering them in the cloud of his glory. [In the time of Moses] the Lord intended his people to be covered with the cloud continually, and he intended to reveal himself unto them, and to show forth his glory more fully amongst them; but they sinned so much in his sight that he declared— ‘My presence shall not go up with this people, lest I should break forth upon them in my fury and consume them in a moment.’ [Yet] Moses was permitted to enter the tabernacle, and to behold the glory of God, and it is said that he talked with the Lord face to face—a blessing which God did intend to bestow upon all Israel had they kept his law and had not hardened their hearts against him. But in the latter days there will be a people so pure in Mount Zion, with a house established upon the tops of the mountains, that God will manifest himself, not only in their Temple and upon all their assemblies, with a visible cloud during the day, but when the night shall come, if they shall be assembled for worship, God will meet with them by his pillar of fire; and when they retire to their habitations, behold each habitation will be lighted up by the glory of God,—a pillar of flaming fire by night. Did you ever hear of any city that was thus favored and blessed since the day that Isaiah delivered this prophecy? No, it is a latter-day work, one that God must consummate in the latter times when he begins to reveal himself, and show forth his power among the nations.”⁵ ¶ *And the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.* The word

dwelling-place is מִבְּנֵי or habitation. It is often used for the dwelling place of God (Gesenius). This word “occurs seventeen times, all but one (Psalms 104:5) referring to God’s dwelling place, either in heaven or the temple” (TWOT). In the D&C we find that the cloud is the *glory of the Lord*. “Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased. Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation. For verily this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house” (D&C 84:2–5). Certainly, the time will come, when in the millennium the glory of the Lord will also be manifest in a more widespread fashion: “For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver” (D&C 45:59). ISAIAH 4:5 obtains much of its strength from an allusion to former times, during the exodus from Egypt, when the presence of the Lord was made manifest as he accepted the people of Israel. “And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Exodus 13:21–22); and “And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night” (Numbers 14:14). The clouds were also to be a protection from the elements and from danger. “He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night” (Psalms 105:39). In Exodus, the cloud was given for a defense against the Egyptians as the Israelites waited to begin their crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:19–20). Regarding the time when Solomon completed the Lord’s Temple, we read: “And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:10–11). In Kirtland, in the dedicatory prayer, the Prophet Joseph prayed, “Let the gift of

⁵ Journal of Discourses. Orson Pratt, June 15, 1873, Delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday afternoon. The rise of Zion in the last days, pp. 82–83. See also ISAIAH 60.

tongues be poured out upon thy people, even cloven tongues as of fire, and the interpretation thereof. And let thy house be filled, as with a rushing mighty wind, with thy glory. Put upon thy servants the testimony of the covenant, that when they go out and proclaim thy word they may seal up the law, and prepare the hearts of thy saints for all those judgments thou art about to send, in thy wrath, upon the inhabitants of the earth, because of their transgressions, that thy people may not faint in the day of trouble” (D&C 109:36b–38). Numerous witnesses spoke of this glorious event. Delitzsch suggests that such a cloud as spoken of here in Isaiah, is a “smoke-cloud, not a watery cloud, like those which ordinarily cover the sky; and by night in a fiery splendour, not merely a lingering fiery splendour like that of the evening sky, but, as the words clearly indicate, a *flaming* brightness (לְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ), and therefore real and living fire ... above all, the cloud and fire were intended as signs of the nearness of God, and His satisfaction. ... [Now, the extent would be such that] the whole mountain [Mount Zion] would thus become a Holy of holies” (Delitzsch, emphasis added). A number of commentators seem confused by the plurality of the expression, *every dwelling place*. As LDS we understand that temples will dot the land, especially in the American continent. ¶ *For upon all the glory of Zion shall be a defence*. While in earlier times those in Israel and Judah built fortified walls and cities for a defense, now it would be the Lord who would be the defense of the children of Jacob. “Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence” (Job 22:25a). We do not have to wait for a millennial day for the Lord to come to our defense. Each of us can surely sing with the Psalmist: “But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy” (Psalms 59:16–17).

6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for* a covert from storm and from rain.

* JST & KJV include “for,” while Book of Mormon deletes.

And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat. “The heat in those regions was very intense, particularly in the vast plains of sand ... While traversing the burning sands of a desert, exposed to the rays of a tropical sun, nothing could be more grateful than the cool shadow of a rock” (Barnes). Lowth further explains, “In countries subject to violent tempests, as well as to intolerable heat, a portable tent is a necessary part of a traveler’s baggage, for defence and

shelter.” Shadow gives protection from the heat and rays of the sun, “He spread a cloud for a covering” (Psalms 105:39a). But the protection goes much further than that of the scorching sun, or blinding sandstorm, it is a protection against both men and evil: “... hide me under the shadow of thy wings” (Psalms 17:8b) and “...in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me” (ISAIAH 49:2b). Furthermore, of all places of protection and refuge, there are none like the Temple, formerly the tabernacle. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15). ¶ *And for a place of refuge*. Regarding a *place of refuge*, the Prophet Joseph wrote that “The time is soon coming, when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes.” The Prophet explained that the great calamities that have been predicted are at the doors, and that we need to look to the Presidency of the Church in order to be safe. For, “the devil will use his greatest efforts to trap the Saints.”⁶ The Lord will be merciful and protective of those who lean upon Him. “For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall” (ISAIAH 25:4). ¶ *And for a covert from storm and from rain*. Storms represent adversity, either physical or spiritual. It is our beloved Savior who can calm the storms of nature, persecution, and adversity: “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39, see also Psalms 107:23–31). So what can we do now, to partake of that protection and be filled with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost? “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:11–18). And with the Psalmist we can rejoice in the Lord, “I will

⁶ Smith, Joseph Jr. *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Edited by B. H. Roberts. 2nd ed., Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932–51. Volume III, p. 391.

abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah” (Psalms 16:1). We also read in ISAIAH 32:1–2, regarding King Messiah, who Himself “... shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in weary land.”)

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