

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 4

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 4

Theme: “We Shall be Called Holy!”

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 4:3 (KJV) “And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.”

INTRODUCTION

The light of hope shines brightest in utmost darkness. Continuing with the theme of the LORD’s judgement against the many great sins of Judah and Jerusalem, the LORD gives hope. The LORD reveals a revived nation. The Christian faith is always a faith over-flowing with hope. No matter how dark the hour in the believer’s life is, hope continues to abound. Victory over trials and sin has always been the message from God. There can be no justification for sins committed. Repentance will always be the only way out of sin, for both believers and unbelievers. Anyone who blames others for his own sins to justify himself or to diminish his culpability, remains in his sins.

The hope that the LORD offers must always be on His terms. His terms always begin with repentance and turning to God. Repentance is not just saying, “I am sorry.” Repentance is turning from our sins, genuinely acknowledging, with a heavy heart, that we have done wrong and would desire to make right that wrong. Fruits of repentance must include turning away from sin and making restitution to the person we sinned against. However, we must realise that we have also sinned against God when we sin against one another. Therefore, repentance always includes turning back to God as well. The only way is through Jesus Christ, according to Holy Scriptures.

Hope is always beyond this world and this life. There is no reincarnation back onto this earth in the form of another creature. The concept of reincarnation is a deception of the evil one. Hope in the LORD after repentance is the greatest blessing from the LORD. One word that aptly describes the condition and the people who dwell in this hope is “holiness.” When there is holiness, the presence of the LORD permeates. The world will be able to see God by the way the believers live. Seeing God in the believer’s life begins today and continues into the future. This chapter provides the student of the Bible with a glimpse into this future even if he is immersed in the pit of sin and darkness. He can come out of that darkness and into God’s marvellous light. However, he can only do so on God’s terms.

OUTLINE

1. Taking Away Shame (v.1);
2. Holiness For all Jews (vv. 2-3);
3. Reason for Holiness (v. 4);
4. Creating Safety and Refuge (vv. 5-6);

COMMENTARY

Taking Away Shame — 4:1

Continuing from where he left off in Chapter 3, Isaiah followed up with the consequences of the deaths of many men in war. The use of the phrase “in that day” affirms this. Obviously, there would be mourning by fathers and mothers because their sons would not be coming back. Wives would cry because their beds would be cold and lonely. Sons and daughters would weep because their fathers would no longer be there to provide for and protect them. Girl friends would feel lost and alone as their hopes for marriage and family would be dashed.

This last group would feel the loss the most. It was considered a curse from the LORD if a married woman was not able to give birth. **Deuteronomy 28:18 (KJV)** “Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.” A woman could not give birth if she could not marry, as any sexual relationship outside of marriage is a sin in the eyes of God. Therefore, she would need to find a husband. However, the deaths of many men in war would lead to a shortage of men in Judah.

In desperation to get out of this curse, these women would propose to the men that they were willing to marry. Many would be willing to marry one single man. The Bible mentioned 7 women to one man. The number 7 might be literal or figurative as in **Proverbs 24:16 (KJV)** “For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”

If it is figurative, then it means that “many women” is taught here. It is a most peculiar state of affairs to have many women crying to marry one man with the condition that the women would “eat their own bread and wear their own apparel.” The husband would not need to provide for their physical well being. The women desperately wanted a husband to relieve themselves of this stigma of singlehood.

Another point to note is that without marriage and new babies born to Israel, she would die or be assimilated into the life of other nations. God’s plan of salvation would be in jeopardy if the nation of Israel disappears from the face of this earth. This was the result of the grievous sins committed by Israel and Judah, over the more than 600 years, since the day the LORD brought Israel into the Promised Land through the faithful hand of Joshua in 1405 B.C.

Bear in mind that the impending exile of the northern kingdom, Israel, by the Assyrians was a curse consequent on her disobedience. It is in accordance with all the conditions for blessings and curses as clearly

specified by the LORD in Deuteronomy 28. In other words, Judah and Israel had been disobedient and deserved to be in this state of just punishment because of their hardened hearts and refusal to repent of their abominations and of many sins, despite the warnings from the LORD's prophets.

Holiness For all Jews — 4:2-3

The phrase "in that day" in verse 1 has a very different meaning from that in verse 2. Here in verse 2, the phrase refers to another time in the history of Judah. While it previously referred to a time of punishment for the national sins committed, it now seems to be one of hope and great consolation. "The branch of the LORD" is a most interesting phrase. To who or what does it refer? The word "branch" literally means, "to sprout," like a bud of a plant. Hence; it is appropriate to translate it as "a branch." The following four verses interpret the word "branch" as "Christ." There is no doubt about that.

Jeremiah 23:5 (KJV) "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." **Jeremiah 33:15 (KJV)** "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." **Zechariah 3:8 (KJV)** "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH."

Zechariah 6:12 (KJV) "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, 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:"

However, it does not necessarily mean that the word "branch" in Isaiah 4:2 also refers to Christ. The final determining factor has to be the immediate context. The first thing to note is the use of the singular for this "branch" which is similar to the other four uses for Christ although the singular could also be used in the generic sense. The second thing is that this branch will be beautiful and glorious. This is contrasted with the earlier verses that describe Judah as a nation full of sin i.e. ugly and without glory. "Beautiful" and "glorious" describe something or someone that is good to look at i.e. glorious splendour. Could "the branch of the LORD" refer to the Jews or Israelites in a state of restoration? This does not make sense because the last part of verse 2 says that the branch of the LORD is beautiful and glorious only to them that are escaped of Israel. Furthermore, verse 3 says that the Jews who were left in Zion and those who remained in Jerusalem shall be called holy. The branch of the LORD cannot be referring to the Jews because they cannot be seeing themselves as beautiful and glorious. The context argues that the Jews, probably only the believing Jews who escaped Israel, were able to see this branch of the LORD as beautiful and glorious. The unbelievers cannot see Christ at all. If

they ever do, they can only see Him as a martyr and nothing more. The conclusion is that “the branch of the LORD,” like in the other occurrences in the OT, has to refer to Christ or the Messiah here.

The next phrase describes the branch of the LORD as in the use of Hebrew parallelism. The phrase is “the fruit of the earth.” This branch of the LORD is not a dead branch. It is alive. It is described here as “the fruit of the earth,” It perhaps refers to Christ’s humanity. In fact, both these imageries refer to Christ’s humanity especially as the ONE who came as a servant and the anointed Saviour and not as king. This passage is a forerunner to the great passage that describes the sufferings of the Messiah in Isaiah 53. The fruit is excellent i.e. majestic in His being, and very comely i.e. pleasing to look at! These two adjectives add to the earlier two adjectives describing the beauty and glory of the branch of the LORD.

Therefore, the day referred here has to be the first coming of the LORD Jesus Christ which is definitely the day of great hope. This was the day that the LORD prophesied in Genesis 3:15 when the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent!

Verse 3 is a reference to eternity. The only ones, who remain in Jerusalem in the day of the LORD, will be God’s children. They are the holy ones. To be holy means to have all their sins forgiven. They will not be limited to the Jews and Israelites only but include all who are believers of the Messiah. They are the ones whose

names are written “among the living in Jerusalem.”

Note the use of both ‘Zion’ and ‘Jerusalem’ to describe the same capital city of the nation of Israel. ‘Zion’ refers to something monumental and conspicuous, like a landmark or a guiding pillar. The word appears for the first time in 2 Samuel 5:7 describing the pride and arrogance of the Jebusites who dwelt in Zion at that time. They taunted David who was seeking a new capital city to rule the united nation of Israel. However, the name, Jerusalem, first appeared in Joshua 10:1. The word “Jerusalem” is a compound word made up of “*ya-rah*” which means “to teach” and “*sha-lam*” which means “peace.” Combined together, the name Jerusalem means a place “to teach peace.”

When the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem are holy, the nation is holy. These names are used to describe the capital of the Lord Jesus Christ when He rules the world during the millennium and after that, the new heaven and new earth for eternity. It is more than just the hope of the Jews to be united with their northern neighbour, the Israelites, on this earth as a nation, which is made up of believers and unbelievers. It is also the glorious and the greatest hope of all when the LORD God Jesus Christ will rule for eternity where only the holy ones will remain and where all sinners are consigned to the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

For the prophet Isaiah to write, given a glimpse of this blessed future that awaits his beloved city, Jerusalem

and Zion must have been a tremendous encouragement. Isaiah ministered in a nation of sin where Israel would soon be destroyed and put into exile by Assyria, the most wicked of all the nations that conquered Israel. But this hope that the LORD gives to him and to all who reads and understands, is like a bright and shining light to one who walks alone in a long and dark tunnel.

Reason for Holiness — 4:4

This holiness found in the believers who will inhabit Zion and Jerusalem is not accomplished by good works or by following heathen idolatrous religions. Verse 4 reveals that it is the LORD who will purge and wash the daughters of Zion of all her sins and filth. It is interesting to note that the tense of the verb, “shall have washed away” is perfect. However, the reference is to a future event. This is the use of the prophetic perfect where as far as the LORD is concerned, the action is viewed to be as good as completed in the past even though it will still be in the future. The certainty of the event coming to pass is emphasised by the LORD here.

Hence, it is not a matter of “if” but “when.” The event will surely come to pass for the LORD has staked His name and reputation on it! The LORD will wash away the filth i.e. the sins of the people of Zion. How can sins be washed away? The only way that sins can be washed away is by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. The Levitical system of worship is a type of Christ, for the blood of animals has no power to wash

away the sins of man and the guilt of sins permanently. Only the blood of Christ has the power to do that! It is the LORD who does the washing away and not man.

Restating the same truth in another manner, Isaiah said that the Lord shall, “have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.” The heinous sins of the Jews resulted in the loss of many lives for all eternity. These lives were lost because of the great sins committed by the people of God. However, all these would be purged by the Lord. The word “purge” means “to cleanse.” The polluted blood has to be cleansed by the blood of Christ. Just as Zion and Jerusalem were mentioned in verse 3 so were they mentioned in verse 4.

The means used by the Lord to purge and wash away the sin and the blood were the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning. The spirit of judgement refers to the preaching against sin. If there is no repentance, death and Hell would follow. The Lord will wash away and purge but that does not mean that there is no prerequisite repentance of sins by the sinners. The repentance has to be genuine and sincerely from the heart, for the Lord is not mocked by the hypocrisy of man.

The spirit of burning refers to the purification of sins, heart and lives. “Fire” has always referred to the process of purification when the Lord is the One wielding it. The cleansing process is spiritual and from within the sinner. It is a process from inside out. It is not manmade. Neither can it be

induced by some psychoanalysis. It is purely by the hand of God and it is salvation to the uttermost. The person literally becomes holy in the sight of God when this process takes place inside the heart and soul. He is now holy from the positional viewpoint (perfectly holy as if he has never sinned at all) and from the practical viewpoint (daily sanctification by the blood of Christ and the Word of God).

When the word of God is preached to the sinner, the spirit of judgement will work in the heart of the sinner. This will result in the 'spirit of burning' convicting him from within his soul that he is a sinner and in need of Christ as his Saviour. This is the process of salvation as taught here.

Creating Safety and Refuge — 4:5-6

The use of the covenantal name LORD (Jehovah) in verse 5 is contrasted with the use of Lord ('a-do-nay) in verse 4. In verse 4, the emphasis is on a master-servant relationship whereas in verse 5, it is on a covenantal relationship that is based upon what God has promised according to His suzerainty covenant. It depends entirely upon His ability and word for the promises to be kept and fulfilled. The LORD will create (perfect tense – another usage of the prophetic perfect) upon every dwelling place of mount Zion and upon her assemblies. This is the LORD's work in protecting all His children. They will forever be safe and secure. They have nothing to fear.

The manner of this protection is described by the use of the Old Testament imagery of the pillar of

cloud following Israel in the day throughout her wandering in the wilderness. This provides shade for Israel because of the heat of the desert sun. Israel enjoyed the bliss of shade and comfort throughout the day regardless of the sun and heat and harsh desert environment. Israel was well protected. At night, when the temperatures could plunge extremely low, the Lord provided the pillar of fire to keep Israel warm. With the pillar of fire at night, there can be no molesting of the people of Israel by brigands that roamed the wilderness of Sinai at night. Israel was kept warm and safe, day and night, from all kinds of enemies, be they animals or human.

Israel was well protected 24/7 by the LORD. The cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night would have the same kind of effect and meaning here as it did in the books of Exodus and Numbers when Israel wandered in the wilderness. This complete protection availed by the LORD over His own people is described as "for upon all the glory shall be a defence." The glory here refers to the believers. The LORD will protect and keep them safe and secure from all harm and danger. Believers here have to include both believing Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 6 describes the LORD as being the believer's refuge. The LORD will provide a tabernacle i.e. a booth or tent not for worship but for refuge. It functions as a house safe from the heat of the sun in the day. It is called a place of refuge functioning as a covert i.e. covering from storm and from rain.

This is more than just a reference to the physical protection that the LORD provides for His people. The Bible is a spiritual book. Of course, the physical needs and protection are taken care of by the LORD.

However, these are seen as emblems of the spiritual attacks that the believers will face both day and night. The LORD will protect and cover them. The protection and covering must not be understood in terms of a superman kind of invincibility as being free from all kryptonite vulnerability. Believers will not be bullet proof or free from bodily harm. They have to endure persecution such as being burned at the stake or eaten by lions as fodder to thrill Romans or be sawn asunder all because of the testimony of Christ and the Word of God. However, they will be in heaven the moment they breathed their last breath on earth.

The believer must not view the definitions of safety and refuge from the world's perspective but from the Bible's perspective. Eternity is always the focus. God calls the believer victorious if he has not compromise his faith unto death. From man's perspective, the believer has lost when he loses his life in the process because of his refusal to compromise. However, the LORD's view is that His child has won and is now safe in the arms of the Saviour.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Hardness of Man's Heart -- The severity of the punishment of the LORD upon the Jews reveals the

hardness of man's heart and the depth of his depravity. The LORD had to reduce the Jews to a state of great desperation before they turned to the LORD in repentance.

We today are no better than they, if not worse. We care not for right and wrong but only what our heart desires. We allow our lusts to run amok, destroying lives of children and families in the process. There is no sin considered grievous or shameful to mankind today, for the ugliness of sin has been cunningly camouflaged to look respectable and glorious. Sadly, this is not a description of the world but the church today!

Just as the LORD judged Israel and Judah in OT times, He will judge His people in NT times. No man who calls himself a believer of the God but brings shame to God and His word will be guiltless. He will surely receive his just punishment.

Hope always follows punishment
– The LORD's compassion is seen in the way He punishes. One hand holds the rod of correction and the other is stretched out warmly and gently coaxing the sinner to repent and to return to the LORD. This chapter is more on hope than on condemnation. The hope and blessing promised here far outweighs the punishment meted out on the Jews by the LORD.

This is demonstration of the love and compassion of the great and holy God. On the one hand, a sinner must be punished without compromise for the LORD is always fair and just. On the other hand, the LORD patiently awaits the sinner to repent and return

to Him. He is ever anxiously waiting for them to return and ever ready to stop the punishment on their return. The purpose of the punishment is to stop the sinner from sinning and that he will return to His heavenly Father.

Complete safety and refuge – The LORD’s people who walk in holiness will be very safe. The LORD Almighty will ensure that all believers are protected from all harm and danger. There is nothing on earth that can separate God from His children. Their place and entrance into heaven is assured as long as they are truly saved. AMEN.

2. Would you be so desperate as to offer yourself like these women in verse 1? Please explain.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 4:1-6;

TUESDAY: Isaiah 4:1-6;

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 4:1-6;

THURSDAY: Isaiah 4:1-6;

FRIDAY: Isaiah 4:1-6.

3. What is the most important difference between the 1st coming and the 2nd coming of Christ? Please explain your answer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do professing believers find it so hard to repent? What are some of the factors that make repentance so difficult?

4. Are you fearful or delighted with the 2nd coming of Christ?

5. If you were asked to define what a holy life is, what would your answer be? Are you living a holy life now?

6. Is there anything that you are fearful of at home or at work?

7. Is there anything that you are fearful of, for the church?
