

### Jerusalem During the Future Millennial Kingdom of Christ

#### Isaiah 4

Isaiah 4 – “*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.”*”<sup>2</sup> *In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped.*<sup>3</sup> *And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.*<sup>4</sup> *When 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,*<sup>5</sup> *then 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.*<sup>6</sup> *And 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.*

#### Background Notes

What is the prophecy in Isaiah 4:1 speaking about? Is this a prophecy of the future - or is it for today? Just think, young men - you could have your choice of a wife from seven beautiful women, all of whom want to marry you, and all of whom promise to be self-supporting – not a bad deal! Well, I’m sorry - this is not a prophecy for today!

We need to look at the **context** to see when this prophecy will be fulfilled. Notice that verse 1 of chapter 4 properly goes with Isaiah 3. Many Bibles point this out, with a break in the text between Isaiah 4:1 and 2. Noted Bibles generally put a subtitle between these two verses. So verse 1 belongs with the subject matter of Isaiah 3. A new subject begins with Isaiah 4:2.

The subject of Isaiah 3 reveals the consequences of rebellion against the Lord. Society breaks down when people rebel against the Lord. The rebellious people must be judged and humbled. In chapter 3, when Isaiah spoke about the day of judgment for Judah and Jerusalem, he was primarily thinking of the judgment that would come at the hands of the Babylonians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC - when Judah was conquered, Jerusalem was besieged and burned, the beautiful Temple of the Lord was destroyed, and many of the remaining people were taken as captives to Babylon.

At that time, the male population of Judah was depleted because many men were killed in the fighting, and many died among the captives and among the refugees that were left in the land. So the “seven women taking hold of one man” conditions described in Isaiah 4:1 were literally fulfilled when Jerusalem was conquered in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

However, because there is an eschatological (future) dimension to the Day of the Lord in Isaiah's prophecies, the fulfillment of Isaiah 4:1 was not completely exhausted in its 6<sup>th</sup> century BC fulfillment. There will come a time in the future when those conditions will once again prevail. That time will be the Tribulation period of the last days. At that time, many men will be killed because of warfare and plague, and there will be such a depletion of the male population that the conditions of verse 1 will again prevail.

The Tribulation time of judgment will immediately precede the return of the Lord to set up His millennial kingdom here on this earth. That millennial kingdom is now described from verse 2 on to the end of this chapter.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Spiritual conditions will be different during the Millennium.

*"In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped" (v2).*

The "**Branch of the Lord**" in verse 2 is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. "The Branch" is one of His Messianic titles. He is a branch in the genealogical tree of King David (Jeremiah 23:5-6). And Zechariah 6:12-13 says, "*Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying, 'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! ...And He shall build the temple of the Lord.'*"

When the Lord returns to earth and sets up His glorious kingdom, He will direct the building of the millennial Temple. And by the way, this reference to a "Temple" is **not** a reference to the Church today (as some teach). The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. But the Temple mentioned here is a literal building, a literal Temple that will be built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. A description of this Millennial Temple, including its dimensions, is given in Ezekiel 40-48.

Most likely the phrase "*the fruit of the earth*" in verse 2 is another reference to the Lord Himself. He will be the pride of the believing Jewish remnant – survivors of the judgment of the Tribulation – who will be living in the land at that future time.

"The survivors of Israel," and "those in Israel who have escaped," and "he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem" - what is the meaning of these phrases? These phrases speak of the people who will survive the Tribulation period of the End Times. From the rest of Scripture we know that the Tribulation period of the future will end with the Battle of Armageddon, when all the armies of the world will be gathered together in Israel, and the Lord will return in judgment. Then the judgment of the nations called the "Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats" (Matthew 25) will take place. According to Joel 3, this judgment will take place in the Jerusalem area, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Those who survive the Tribulation judgment, from Israel and the Gentile nations, will enter into the earthly kingdom of our Lord whose capital will be Jerusalem. They are the survivors of Israel who escaped death. They are the living righteous who will inherit the kingdom. They will be called “holy,” and they will be part of the 1000-year earthly kingdom of our Lord - the Millennium.

What a wonderful kingdom that will be! Jerusalem will be cleansed and prepared for the millennial kingdom of Christ.

Verse 4: “...when 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.”

How different it will be from the past and the present that day will be! Righteousness will prevail! Holiness will be the mark of the kingdom - not wealth or worldly power or position or prestige. Spiritual conditions will be different during the Millennium.

## **2. Physical conditions will be different during the Millennium.**

*“Then 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. And 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” (v5-6).*

I’m sure you’re aware that some Christians don’t believe that there will be a Millennium. They are known as “amillennialists.” Amillennialists believe that Israel has been set aside, so they take all the Old Testament passages that (we believe) refer to this future millennial kingdom of Christ, “spiritualize” them and say that they apply to the Church today. But it’s very hard to do that with many Old Testament passages. For example, how do you spiritualize verses 5 and 6? Try it! It’s impossible to spiritualize these verses and apply them to the Church if you’re going to make the details mean anything.

Then what do these verses mean? We believe these verses refer to *literal changes in physical conditions* that will take place in Jerusalem – the headquarters and capital of our Lord’s millennial kingdom. The Lord will set up His throne in Jerusalem and reign from there. In the context of Isaiah 4, “Mount Zion” is another name for all of Jerusalem.

From both Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47 (and other Old Testament passages), we know that there will be topographical changes in and around Jerusalem in the future, when the Lord returns to set up His earthly kingdom. Isaiah 2:2 says, “*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.*” When we discussed Isaiah 2, we said that this referred to the millennial kingdom of Christ when all nations will be subject to the Lord’s rule. It looks like the height of the mountains is to be taken literally. For example, the elevation of Hebron (about 20 miles south of Jerusalem) is

presently higher than Jerusalem – but when the topographical changes take place in the future it appears that Jerusalem will be higher than Hebron. A major geological rift runs the length of the land of Israel, and the whole area is subject to topographical changes through earthquake activity.

In Isaiah 4 we see that there will be a kind of protective covering, or canopy, over earthly Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom. It will give shelter from the heat of the sun and from rain and storms. This protective canopy will appear from a distance as a smoking cloud by day and a flaming fire by night. It reminds us of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that God used to guide and protect the children of Israel in wilderness.

In view of the description of the new heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22, some credible Bible scholars have suggested that during the Millennium, the new heavenly Jerusalem, which has no Temple, will be like a “satellite city” that will hover over the earthly Jerusalem - which does have a Temple (as we’ve already seen).

If this view of the New Jerusalem is correct, the next logical question would be: “Is this protective canopy only over earthly Jerusalem, or is it also over the new hovering Jerusalem as well?” We don’t know - but one thing we can say for sure: physical conditions will be different during the Millennium.

## **Practical Application**

### **Try describing summer to a person who has only known winter!**

When we talk about how everything is going to be very different in the future - not just in the Eternal State, but also during the Millennium - some people have a hard time grasping the truth that such changes are possible. These people find the amillennial interpretation of future things convenient!

Well, if you’re having a hard time imagining the changes that will come when Jesus Christ returns, remember this illustration. Suppose it’s the middle of January in Boston or New York City, and we’re talking with a person who has never experienced summer - or even seen pictures of it. All this person has ever experienced is snow and ice and cold. Now suppose we try to explain that changes will take place in just a few months, and describe what “summer” will be like. Try describing green grass, and leaves on trees, and flowers everywhere, and warm sun – and then promise that all these things will literally happen in just a few short months! The person who knows only winter would probably think you’re either dreaming – or making up a foolish and deceptive tale. No way could you be describing reality!

Do you see the point of the illustration? If you’re having trouble picturing the amazing new conditions of the Millennium, remember – it’s similar to trying to understand summer when you’ve only known winter!