

Shelter from the Storm

Isaiah 4:1-6

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7/24/2022

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Why is Isaiah Chapter 4 so short?

Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro is given credit for first dividing the Latin Vulgate into chapters, but his contemporary and fellow cardinal Stephen Langton created in 1205 the chapter divisions we use today.

- The point is, the chapter divisions are not inspired so we should be careful reading too much into them.

Apparently, Cardinals Hugo and Stephen thought this chapter is something of a transition between God's condemnation of the sinful ladies of Judah and describing Judah as a disappointing vineyard.

- Certainly Isaiah 4:1 really goes in Chapter 3 and Isaiah 4:2-6 stands on its own describing the Millennial Kingdom.

Why would God remind Judah of the promise of the Millennial Kingdom at this point?

The Millennial Kingdom is the fulfillment of the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant reinforcing the idea that God will not forsake Israel even though they had forsaken Him and their present circumstances look like He would.

So, by way of review, what was the end of Isaiah 3 about?

God was condemning the worldly way of the women of Judah which represented the spiritual condition of their culture.

Isaiah 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."*

Why was there a 7-to-1 ratio of women to men?

The Babylonian conquest of Judah. As a result of the judgments of the LORD detailed in Isaiah 3:16-26, the daughters of Zion will have few men to choose from as husbands.

Isaiah 3:25 – *Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war.*

The women would be so desperate for marriage that will not expect their husbands to provide for them at all (*We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel*).

- Instead, it would be enough to simply take the name of a husband (*only let us be called by your name*), so that it would take away the reproach of being unmarried and childless (not an issue in today's culture).

Is this describing bigamy or polygamy?

It could be either one or both, both are marriages to multiple spouses. In a bigamous marriage, the two or more spouses are typically unaware of one another. In a polygamous marriage, two or more spouses are aware of each other's union to the spouse.

What other examples of polygamy are in Scripture?

The first instance was that of Lamech in Genesis 4:19. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and others all had multiple wives. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (essentially wives of a lower status), according to 1 Kings 11:3.

Why did God allow polygamy in the Old Testament?

The Bible does not specifically say why God allowed polygamy. As we speculate about God's silence, there is at least one key factor to consider... Due to patriarchal societies, it was nearly impossible for an unmarried woman to provide for herself.

- Women were often uneducated and untrained.
- Women relied on their fathers, brothers, and husbands for provision and protection.
- Unmarried women were often subjected to prostitution and slavery.

So, it seems that God may have allowed polygamy was far better than the alternatives: prostitution, slavery, or starvation.

- In addition to the protection/provision factor, polygamy enabled a much faster expansion of humanity, fulfilling God's command to "be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth" (Genesis 9:7).

How does God view polygamy today?

Even while allowing polygamy, the Bible presents monogamy as the plan that conforms most closely to God's ideal for marriage.

Genesis 2:24 – *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife [not wives], and they will become one flesh [not fleshes]*

God also said that the kings were not supposed to multiply wives (or horses or gold, Deut 17:17).

- Thus, it can be understood as declaring that having multiple wives causes problems. This can be clearly seen in the life of Solomon (1 Kings 11:3-4).

In 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6 give *“the husband of one wife”* in a list of qualifications for spiritual leadership (a one-woman man).

- While these qualifications are specifically for positions of spiritual leadership, they should apply equally to all Christians.

Ephesians 5:22-33 speaks of the relationship between husbands and wives. When referring to a husband (singular), it always also refers to a wife (singular).

- If polygamy were allowable, the entire illustration of Christ's relationship with His body (the church) and the husband-wife relationship falls apart.

Why did God's tolerance of polygamy change?

Even going back to Adam and Eve, polygamy was not God's original intent. God seems to have allowed polygamy to solve a problem, but it is not the ideal.

- In most modern societies, there is absolutely no need for polygamy.
- In most cultures today, women are able to provide for and protect themselves—removing the only “positive” aspect of polygamy.

Isaiah 4:2-6 – Millennial Kingdom

² *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.*

³ *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.* 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,* ⁵ *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.* ⁶ *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.*

v2 – What is the Branch of the LORD?

The Branch of the LORD is a Messianic title, speaking of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 23:5 – *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.*

This image is repeated in Isaiah 11:1: *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.* See also Zechariah 3:8: *For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.*

Why is Jesus likened to a Branch?

The ideas behind the title Branch of the LORD are those of fruitfulness and life. Jesus used the same image when He said that He was the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5).

What does “in that day” refer to? Is it in the midst of women pursuing polygamy?

In that day does not mean that the Messiah would appear when these judgments were taking place on the daughters of Zion.

- It pointed to the description of the Millennial Kingdom to follow.
- It is here because the promise of the coming Millennial Kingdom helped them cope with their suffering.

How does the promise of the coming Millennial Kingdom help us cope with our difficulties today?

For Christians, we know we will receive our glorified resurrected bodies before Jesus returns to earth (and we will be with Him).

- The Millennial Kingdom will be true peace on earth without any fallen angels (spiritual warfare) and most of the curse will be removed.

For the Old Testament faithful, knowing that the time will come when God intervenes to deliver Israel from their oppressors is a blessing.

When would the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped?

This has to be referring to the survivors of the Tribulation who enter into the Millennial Kingdom because it is the time of the Branch. It can't be referring to the Lord's first advent because there was no deliverance for Israel.

What does this reveal about the Millennial Kingdom?

Prosperity will be the rule during the Millennial Kingdom... this is what you'd expect with the Lord Himself ruling on earth.

Why would God plan to have a period of time (dispensation) when there will be heaven on earth?

- The utopia humans long for will be satisfied by God himself, not man.
- It fulfills the promises God made to Israel (and also to the church).
- It proves that people truly have a free will and even in a perfect environment some will reject a relationship with the Savior.
- It foreshadows the Eternal State.

v3 – Why will the survivors of the Tribulation be called holy?

Everyone who survives the Tribulation will be believers in Jesus Christ...

Matthew 24:22 – *unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

Also, holiness marks the society where the Branch of the LORD reigns.

- This is in contrast with the days of the sinful daughters of Zion, where they were called attractive, fashionable, and sexy. But in the Millennial Kingdom they would be called holy.

What does it mean that the survivors of the Tribulation will be holy?

Holy does not mean super-spiritual, sinless perfection, or spiritually superior. It means a life, a heart, a mind, and a body that is genuinely separated unto the LORD. It is a life lived apart from the thinking and heart of this world, this flesh, and the devil, and lived apart to the LORD.

Who are those who are “recorded among the living”?

Certainly, there will be a list of all the mortals who survive but since these mortals will all be believers in Jesus the Messiah, they are also recorded in the Book of Life...

Philippians 4:3 – *I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the **Book of Life**.*

What is the Book of Life?

It is the record of who will spend eternity with the Lord:

Revelation 20:15 – *If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

It is the roll of those who are saved, see also Revelation 3:5; 20:12; and Philippians 4:3.

- The same book is also called the Lamb's Book of Life because it contains the names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 13:8; 21:27).

How can you be sure your name is written in the Book of Life?

Be sure you're saved. Repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior...

John 3:16 – *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Once your name is in the Book of Life, can it be erased or blotted out?

Revelation 3:5 – *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life*

Don't read into this what it doesn't say... it says our names would not be blotted out. Many other passages affirm our eternal security...

John 10:28 – *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

It is also likely that all names are written in the Book of Life when mortal life begins (conception) and are only blotted out when they die not trusting in Christ.

But doesn't Psalm 69:28 indicate that a person's name can be blotted out of the Book of Life?

Psalm 69:28 – *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

This “book of the living” should not be confused with the Lamb's Book of Life. David is referring to earthly, physical life, not eternal life in heaven. The same is true of the “book” mentioned by Moses...

Exodus 32:31-33 – *Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” And the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.*

God keeps good records. He knows His own, and He has set the names of His children permanently in His book.

v4 – What will the Lord do at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom?

The Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion: When the Branch of the LORD reigns on earth, there will be cleansing. The cleansing will not come easily; it will come by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. But it will be worth it.

What does this cleansing of Judah (and the earth) foreshadow?

The ultimate cleansing of all creation at the beginning of the Eternal State... both involve burning off the impurities:

2 Peter 3:10 – *the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

The Eternal State will be a new heavens and a new earth which will not be subject to sin and the effects of sin, see Revelation 21-22.

Revelation 21:5 – *Behold, I make all things new*

v5 – What is this “cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night”?

When the Branch of the LORD reigns on earth, there will be the tangible presence of the LORD. Just as in the days of the Exodus, God will be as real as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22).

Does this mean the shekinah glory will be present over Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom?

It sure looks like it...

- The word shekinah is not in the Bible, but its concept is. The Jewish rabbis coined this term from a Hebrew word that means “he caused to dwell,” signifying that it was a divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on this earth.
- The Shekinah was first evident when the Israelites set out from Succoth in their escape from Egypt. There the Lord appeared in a cloudy pillar in the day and a fiery pillar by night (Exodus 13:20–22).

What is this covering that will be over Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom?

The Hebrew word translated “covering” here is huppah... the same word used for a wedding canopy under which a Jewish bride and groom exchange vows.

- So, whatever this covering is, it will represent the inhabitants of Jerusalem being married to God.
- Jonathan Cahn: we don’t have to wait for God’s huppah to be married to God... we can have a personal relationship with Him now!

v6 – What is indicated by the “tabernacle for shade” during the Millennial Kingdom?

When the Branch of the LORD reigns on earth, His presence will also provide protection. The LORD's people will be safe and secure, washed, and in His abiding presence.

While Jesus is not physically with us during this Age, how does He still provide us shelter from the storm?

Psalm 46:1 – *God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.*

We still have the presence of the Holy Spirit Who blesses us with spiritual gifts which help us cope with our troubles in this fallen world. And we have the promises of Jesus...

Matthew 6:31-33 – *Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Does this mean we should not be preppers as we see the birth pangs of the Tribulation?

No, there are principles here we should apply such as:

Proverbs 22:3 – *The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.*

God honors preparedness particularly when the danger is perceived through spiritual discernment. It is wise to prepare for the evil that is coming.

Proverbs 6:6-8 – *Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.*

Saving for a time of shortage is prudent.

How do we balance preparedness with trusting in God for our provision?

We should do both but avoid excesses...

Proverbs 25:16 – *If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.*

Too much of a good thing is bad. Self-control for moderation is one of the gifts of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23). Extreme hoarding brings the Parable of the Rich Fool to mind:

Luke 12:18-20 – *I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’*

Thinking that you can lay up enough provisions to get you through 7 years of the Tribulation would not be moderation, it is excess... not only is this idea based on bad doctrine, it seriously lacks faith in God’s provision.

But didn't Joseph laying up provisions to get through a 7-year famine reveal the wisdom of God?

It did for that situation where the laying up of provisions fulfilled prophecy and helped make Israel into a nation. But that doesn't apply to the church going through the Tribulation...

Revelation 3:10 – *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

While the church will experience birth pangs preceding the Tribulation, we will not have to suffer through it. Instead, a better use of our resources during the Church Age is to help others to know the Lord. As Jesus gave as the moral of the Parable of the Unjust Steward:

Luke 16:9 – *I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.*

So, what should Godly preparation at the end of the Church Age look like?

- Be spiritually prepared: by being in an active relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ... also know what you believe and why you believe it.
- Have supplies to get you through several weeks of supply chain disruptions (what we've seen is not likely to get better).
- Get as out of debt as soon you possibly can; physical assets will be better than money in the bank.
- Have items to barter for supplies to weather the coming economic storm (non-perishable food, ammunition, etc).
- Consider other networking measures as suggested by Pastor Shahram Hadian, a Persian-American former Muslim, who was recently invited by Brandon Holhaus to speak on his Truth in Love Project at Rock Harbor Church (www.tilproject.com).

What applications come to mind from our discussion today?

- While God tolerated many things like polygamy at one time, it doesn't mean it is right.
- God's promises of the Millennial Kingdom help us cope with the craziness of our fallen world.
- It is important to be in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- The prudent will prepare for birth pangs of the Tribulation but trust in the deliverance of God for the Tribulation itself.