

God will Cleanse the Remnants with the Spirit of Judgement and Fire!

Isaiah 4:1-6

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. Historical Background

Prophet Isaiah lived and served God during the time of **King Uzziah** (Good King), **King Jotham** (Good King), **King Ahaz** (Evil King), **King Hezekiah** (Good King) and **King Manasseh** (Evil King). Isaiah's Call into the Prophetic Ministry began during the time King Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1-13). Biblical historians believe that Isaiah was killed by King Manasseh. The years between King Uzziah and King Manasseh add up to **61 years**. If we *assume* Isaiah was in his twenties when God called him into the Prophetic Ministry, he would have been around 86 years old when he died.

As we learned in the previous lessons, the *recipients* of **God's Judgement** emphasized by "woes" included the Kings, various officials, elders, priests, men and women both in Israel (Northern Kingdom) and Judah (Southern Kingdom). We must recall that the Israelites are not new to God's Judgement (Book of Judges) as well as the reason why they were divided into two nations! But they didn't learn from their history to do better! As we look at the List of Kings in the two kingdoms, the **Evil Kings** outnumber the **Good Kings**!

B. Biblical Context

The Book of Isaiah is the longest prophetic book of the Old Testament consisting of 66 Chapters neatly divided into 2 Sections: chapters 1 – 39 deal with the **Indictment** God levels at the Israelites and **Judgement** which will follow. On the other hand, chapters 40 – 66 *reveal* God's Promises of **Forgiveness, Deliverance** and **Restoration** through "**The Branch of the LORD.**" The Book of Isaiah reveals the Nature of God's Judgement upon the Israelites, the Reasons for the Divine Judgement, the Severity of the Judgement and the *sweeping* destruction and *complete* devastations which result from it. The Prophecies of Isaiah also contain glorious promises about Salvation through "**The Branch of the LORD,**" the *spiritual purification* of the Remnants and the continuation of God's Plan of Salvation through the Messiah. In Isaiah chapter 4, we will pay attention to the spiritual significance, meanings, and implications of references to the words: "In that Day," Jerusalem and Spirit of Judgement and Fire.

II. THE LESSON: God will Cleanse with the Spirit of Judgement and Fire!

As we carefully examine the Scripture, we realize that God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) operates in various ways at different times. In Genesis 1, at the Time of creation, we learn that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" as an independent Entity apart from God. When Moses expressed his frustration about the burden of leading the grumbling and complaining Israelites, God instructed him to summon 70 Elders to help him and said: "I will come down and speak with you there and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone" (Numbers 11:16-17). Notice God didn't take all of the Spirit from Moses but said I will "take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them." So, God took "of the Spirit" which was upon Moses and put *some portion* of the Spirit on the 70 Elders. When God decided to elevate David, He sent Samuel to Anoint him. The Bible says, "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers and from that day on **the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power**" (1 Samuel 16:13). In Acts 2:1-4, the Bible describes how the Holy Spirit was manifested Himself and anointed the 120 disciples in the form of "**tongues of fire** that separated and came to rest on *each of them*. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." God's Spirit can manifest itself in whatever manner He chooses for the Divine Purpose of Advancing God's Kingdom on earth. What is absolutely clear is that God's Spirit was involved in the Creation of the Universe, empowering His servants, initiating and expanding the New Testament Church, sprinkling the Churches with Spiritual Gifts as He apportioned it, etc. We recall what John the Baptist told the people: "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.** His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with **unquenchable fire**" (Matthew 3:11-12). The Holy Spirit *sanctifies* and *purifies* to prepare the Redeemed of the Lord for holiness and service! On the other hand, "**In That Day,**" God's Spirit of Judgement manifests itself as a "**unquenchable fire!**"

1. vv. 1-2. "In That Day."

The phrase "**In that Day**" points to the **Appointed Time** for the *manifestations* of **God's Judgement** in line with the Prophecies which are about *future events* that *will surely come*. In the midst of the pronouncements of **the terrifying nature of God's Judgement**, a *radiant glimmer* of **Hope**

flickers about “**The Branch of the LORD**” which will usher in a “Glorious, beautiful and fruitful” *future* for “**the survivors in Israel.**” The faithful and obedient **remnants** who *witnessed* the total destruction of Jerusalem (the City of David), the ransacking and complete destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the mass killings of the Israelites and who *survived* their 70 years of exilic existence in Babylon will be *blessed enough to receive and believe* the Glorious Hope “**The Branch of the LORD**” shall bring! Understand the Prophecies were pronounced before God handed the Israelites over to Nebuchadnezzar for total destruction. Those who survived the 70 years of Babylonian exile and returned back to Jerusalem, Isaiah’s prophecies about the “glorious, beautiful and fruitful” *future* helped them to hold on to their faith and keep their hope in God!

2. v. 3. “**All Who are Recorded Among the Living.**”

In this verse, the Bible highlights that there were those who remained in Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar didn’t deport everyone into exile; he took the well-educated, skilled as well as the youngest and brightest such as Daniel from among the royalty. He left the rest of the Israelites in the ruined country and devastated city to live as second-citizens. The prophecies pronounced through the mouth of Isaiah became true! *Now the portion of the prophecy in verse 3 must be understood in connection with verses 4, 5 and 6.* **Together, they reference to the times of the Messiah, the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!** There is no other way of understanding it. I say this because none of the Israelites experienced the Glory of God *in that way* even though there was *spiritual revival* ushered in by **Nehemiah** during the *postexilic period*. The Israelites continued to exist under Assyrian, Persian and Roman rules until God sent “The Branch of the LORD” in the form of a child born of Virgin Mary, the One who would be “Called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. .. [the One] who will “reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever...” (Isaiah 9:6-7). So, we should understand the sentence “All who are *recorded among the living* in **Jerusalem**” in two ways.

a) *Postexilic Period.*

Recall that in Ezra and Nehemiah, the Israelites that *survived* the Babylonian exile and returned to Jerusalem and those who were left behind and survived the harsh living conditions had to present themselves by their Tribal Ancestry line and be recorded so that they can be organized according to the Law. The Priests, Levites, the Elders, etc. were re-established and **they had rededicated themselves to the LORD by pledging their allegiance to the Covenant.** *There was some spiritual cleansing that needed to happen before the spiritual*

revival. The Law of Moses had to be read and taught through the communities. They had to build the walls of Jerusalem. They had to begin the renovation of the Jerusalem Temple. They had to rededicate their lives to God and renew their faith! For those who survived and blessed enough to experience it, it was a refreshing of the Spirit! Their names were recorded among the Living because they were remnants of the faith! It was a time of Great Spiritual and Moral Revival! *Can you imagine what that meant for them and what such affirmation did to their souls?!* That was only possible because God was Faithful and Forgiving!

b) *Post the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God's Word in Isaia gives us hope and revives our spirits today because of the Fulfilment of the prophecies such as "The Branch of the LORD" and "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (Isaiah 11:1) became a reality in Jesus Christ! And the prophecy in Revelation assures us that the names of those who maintain their faith in the Lord will be entered "... in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:22-27).

3. v. 4. God will Cleanse by a Spirit of Judgement and a Spirit of Fire.

God has manifested His anger and Judgement by way of fire some occasions, for example, (a) When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by sending "burning sulfur" from the sky; (b) when Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu mishandled their sacred priestly duty in disobedience to God's commands (Leviticus 10:1-5), (c) when the Israelites expressed their ungratefulness by complaining, grumbling (Numbers 11:1-3) and (d) when God finally judges Satan and all of those who followed him, He will send "fire" from heaven and devour them ... (Revelation 20:7-10). Hallelujah! In all of these examples, what is clear is that "**In that Day,**" God's Holy and Righteous Judgement will manifest itself through "**a spirit of Judgement and a spirit of Fire!**" The New Jerusalem will be absolutely free from sinfulness, corruption, lies, injustice, oppression, murder, and the like because "In that Day, ... The Lord will wash away the filth of men and women, clean the bloodstains ... by the Spirit of Judgement and Fire!

In Scripture, both **Zion** and **Jerusalem** are used interchangeably over time. Depending on the contexts in which they are used, they could reference either a place or the people of God, the Israelites, as in "**the women of Zion,**" in the city of **Jerusalem.**

4. vv. 5-6. God's Glory will be the Shelter and Refuge.

The vivid picture verses 5 and 6 portray recalls how God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. The Bible says, "By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their

way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day and night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people” (Exodus 13:20-22). Furthermore, it recalls how God’s Glory was manifested over Mt. Horeb/Sinai when Moses went up the mountain to meet with God and receive the Law. Mt. Sinai is associated with God because of the many occasions His Glory, His Presence, His Commanding Voice, etc. were revealed to the Israelites. Verses 5 and 6 point to Revelation 21 in regard to **The New Jerusalem** and how the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its The Temple. “The city doesn’t need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the Glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ... **Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose name are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life!**” Hallelujah!

III. CONCLUSION

We must learn from history, from both the history of the Israelites and the history of Christianity. The Word of God is True! The Prophecies about the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is imminent! We don’t know the day or hour, but He is coming back with the Spirit of Judgement and Fire! Let us keep the Faith being strengthened, enlightened and refreshed by His Word!