

Isaiah 4-5

- In chapters 2-5, we complete the overview
 - We have already covered:
 - 2:2
 - A new glorious future for Israel
 - 2:6
 - Sinful Israel
 - 2:12
 - A day of reckoning
 - Now we return to finish the overview
 - 4:2
 - Return to looking at Israel's coming glory
 - Finally, chapter 5
 - Describes the beginning of the Age of the Gentiles
 - The beginning of a long period of judgment against Israel for their sin
- First, we need to complete the discussion of the day of reckoning, when Israel will receive the full measure of God's anger for their disobedience under the Old Covenant
 - We call this future time "Tribulation" based on New Testament teaching, which we will consider in the future as Isaiah returns to this topic
 - For now, we consider what he gives us in his introduction
 - Last week we left off looking at the condition of men in Israel
 - And we had just briefly considered the condition of women
 - Let's quickly finish our examination of the women's punishment and then move forward into the final two sections of the introduction

[Is. 3:16](#) ¶ Moreover, the LORD said, "Because the daughters of Zion are proud
And walk with heads held high and seductive eyes,
And go along with mincing steps
And tinkle the bangles on their feet,

[Is. 3:17](#) Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs,
And the LORD will make their foreheads bare."

[Is. 3:18](#) In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands,
crescent ornaments,

[Is. 3:19](#) dangling earrings, bracelets, veils,

[Is. 3:20](#) headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets,

[Is. 3:21](#) finger rings, nose rings,

[Is. 3:22](#) festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses,

[Is. 3:23](#) hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils.

[Is. 3:24](#) Now it will come about that instead of sweet perfume there will be
putrefaction;

Instead of a belt, a rope;

Instead of well-set hair, a plucked-out scalp;

Instead of fine clothes, a donning of sackcloth;

And branding instead of beauty.

- We mentioned briefly last week how the women of tribulation were complicit in the nation's sin, but in their own way
 - They demonstrate pride and haughtiness and seek attention for their wealth
 - V.16 - walking in such a way so as to attract attention
 - We can assume that their wealth came as a consequence of their seductiveness
 - Husbands who gave them wealth by crushing the poor of Israel (verse 15)
 - Then in verses 18-23, he lists 21 items which will be removed
 - 3 x 7
 - Three is the number of God in complete form
 - Seven is the number of completion or perfection
 - It would seem that 21 signifies God at work in completing judgment
 - God reverses their circumstances in the Tribulation to remove their beauty and afflict them with scabs and their hair will fall out

- He removes all that causes them to see themselves as beautiful
 - How does this happen in Tribulation?
 - As we've done in the previous verses, we can forward to Revelation and see glimpses of what events might produce this outcome

[Rev. 16:8](#) ¶ The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

[Rev. 16:9](#) Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

[Rev. 16:10](#) ¶ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,

[Rev. 16:11](#) and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

- The bowl judgments, which come near the end of the seven year Tribulation, produce tremendous suffering on Earth
 - Including this reference to sores - perhaps the scabs mentioned in Isaiah 4?
- What is God's purpose in these judgments, do you think
 - We notice from Revelation that they didn't arrive at repentance
 - Arguably, that's not their purpose
 - What purpose does Tribulation serve?
 - We will come back to this, as Isaiah does many times
 - But as a preview, consider how chapter 40 of Isaiah opens
 - Chapter 40 corresponds to Matthew, the start of "Second Isaiah" (New Testament)
 - [Is. 40:1](#) ¶ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

[Is. 40:2](#) Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

[Is. 40:3](#) A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

[Is. 40:4](#) Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

[Is. 40:5](#) And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

- After Israel has received double for her sins, she sees her Deliverer arrive in glory
 - We will look much more closely at the purpose of Tribulation as we continue through Isaiah coming weeks
 - For now, let's move to the end of three and into four...

[Is. 3:25](#) Your men will fall by the sword
And your mighty ones in battle.

[Is. 3:26](#) And her gates will lament and mourn,
And deserted she will sit on the ground.

[Is. 4:1](#) ¶ For seven women will take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach!"

- I read through 4:1 because it completes a thought for Isaiah
 - The Tribulation brings so much death among the Jewish men, that the women find their judgment in the lack of husbands
 - We said last week it was a source of shame for them to be without a husband
 - They call for a man to take away their reproach
 - Then in verse 2, Isaiah's tone changes sharply again

[Is. 4:2](#) ¶ In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.

[Is. 4:3](#) It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy — everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem.

[Is. 4:4](#) When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning,

[Is. 4:5](#) then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy.

[Is. 4:6](#) There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

- Now we return to a discussion of Israel's coming age of glory
 - Beginning with a discussion of the Branch of the Lord
 - How many have heard of Isaiah 11 when it says:

[Is. 11:1](#) ¶ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

[Is. 11:2](#) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD —

- Well, here we see the Branch motif used to describe the coming Messiah first described
 - Naturally, this is part of that extended introduction or prelude to the book, so Isaiah throws out references here and there which he will follow up later with more detail
 - The Branch imagery conveys several ideas, which Isaiah will examine at points in the book
 - A branch is something that finds its source in something else, and is of the same material usually
 - In Christ's case, the branch image suggests the Messiah having his origin in the God of Israel
 - That isn't to suggest that God the Father made or created the Branch
 - But rather than the Son comes from the Father in the sense of the incarnation

- God becomes man and enters His creation in a new way
 - Thus He is a Branch from the Lord
 - Later, Isaiah will use the Branch image in an earthly way, to describe which family the Messiah will come from - Jesse
- In Isaiah 4, we are back to describing the Messianic Kingdom
 - We know this is speaking of the Messianic kingdom because of five details in this short passage
 - The first clue that we are looking at the Branch in His second coming is he was glorious and beautiful
 - He was not considered beautiful and glorious to Israel in his first arrival
 - Instead, he was despised and mocked and put to death
 - The second clue that this is the time of the Messianic kingdom is found in the second half of verse 2
 - The fruit of the earth is enjoyed by the survivors of Israel
 - Israel will receive this Branch and be blessed by Him on a physical Earth where they receive the Earth's produce
 - But only a surviving remnant will enjoy these blessings
 - The third clue is that those who are in this surviving group, according to verse 3, are called holy - all of them
 - Holy is the word qadosh, which can be holy or consecrated, or saints
 - So this is a time when all Israel consists of those who survive something, are present with the Lord, receive the fruit of the Earth, and are saints
 - The fourth clue is how they reach this state of holiness
 - Their sin has been washed away in verse 4 following a period of purging accomplished by a spirit of judgment and burning
 - Tribulation, which precedes Christ's return and the Messianic Kingdom
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- The final clue is found in verses 5 & 6
 - During this time, Israel will live around Mount Zion (which refers to the glory of Israel)
 - And there will be supernatural displays of God's glory protecting and caring for the nation
 - Smoke, fire, a canopy of glory
 - Clearly, these events have never happened in Israel since these words were written
 - It must refer to a future fulfillment in the Kingdom
- So, we've seen Isaiah describe Israel's sin, and her coming punishment in the Tribulation and her coming glory in the kingdom
 - But Isaiah's introduction is complete until he addresses another period of judgment which will arrive just a few decades after he wrote
 - And it continues today and will continue until the time of that glory in chapter 4
 - It's the times of the Gentile
 - A time when God uses Gentile nations to bring judgment against His people in the nation of Israel, beginning with the invasion of Babylon

[Is. 5:1](#) ¶ Let me sing now for my well-beloved
A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.
My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

[Is. 5:2](#) He dug it all around, removed its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
And He built a tower in the middle of it
And also hewed out a wine vat in it;
Then He expected it to produce good grapes,
But it produced only worthless ones.

[Is. 5:3](#) ¶ "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
Judge between Me and My vineyard.

[Is. 5:4](#) "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?
Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?

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- Isaiah sings this song about His beloved (God) and God's vineyard
 - God dug around it, prepared the ground, planted the best vines and placed a tower, or watchtower to protect it, prepared a vat to receive the fruit
 - And He expected it to produce good grapes
 - Instead, it produced worthless ones (beushim = worthless = wild or stinking)
 - Then God asks Jerusalem's inhabitants to judge between God and his vineyard
 - That phrase means you decide how God should respond to this situation
 - So Judah becomes the judge so to speak
 - What more could God have done?
 - He prepared the land, made everything ready for the harvest
 - So why didn't the vine produce good grapes?
- At this point, Isaiah leaves the question unanswered as to why unanswered
 - It's a paradox because everything we indicates that the grapes should have been good - yet they weren't
 - Then Isaiah continues on to show what God will do since the vineyard didn't produce as expected

[Is. 5:5](#) "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:
I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed;
I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground.

[Is. 5:6](#) "I will lay it waste;
It will not be pruned or hoed,
But briars and thorns will come up.
I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it."

- God's response is a systematic dismantling and abandonment of the vineyard
 - After all, if God has done all that could be expected to produce good fruit but the fruit didn't come
 - Then there must be something wrong with the vineyard itself

- So God removes the hedges allowing it to be consumed by overgrowth and trampled by animals
- The ground will lie fallow, and weeds will take over
- No rain will come to keep the ground from producing
- Then Isaiah turns the corner and makes his point through this parable

[Is. 5:7](#) ¶ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel
And the men of Judah His delightful plant.
Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

[Is. 5:8](#) ¶ Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field,
Until there is no more room,
So that you have to live alone in the midst of the land!

[Is. 5:9](#) In my ears the LORD of hosts has sworn, "Surely, many houses shall become desolate,
Even great and fine ones, without occupants.

[Is. 5:10](#) "For ten acres of vineyard will yield only one bath of wine,
And a homer of seed will yield but an ephah of grain."

[Is. 5:11](#) Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink,

Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!

[Is. 5:12](#) Their banquets are accompanied by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute,
and by wine;

But they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD,
Nor do they consider the work of His hands.

- Surprise, but the analogy was talking about Israel all the time
 - Israel is the Vineyard and the people are the vines
 - God established them as a people expecting them to produce justice and righteousness
 - But they only produced bloodshed and distress
 - One letter difference in Hebrew between the pairs of words in v.7 - another Isaiah play on words
 - They were stinking grapes to God
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- So now, the analogy becomes difficult for Israel
 - Just as the vineyard was dismantled, so will Israel be, both the land itself and the people
 - Woe (hoy=judgment)
- The first woe falls on the land owners who disobeyed the Mosaic Law and took land and held on to it despite the Law's requirement to return it in the Year of Jubilee
 - This is how the men (and their wives) became rich at the expense of the poorer families
 - These houses would become desolate
 - Like vineyard becoming fallow land, the homes would be unoccupied
 - And the land they bought will only produce a tenth of it's normal harvest
- A second woe falls on those who resort to drunkenness
 - Both to those who rise early to drink and those who stay up late to drink
 - The emphasis is on drinking in excess, not drinking alcohol at all
 - And their sin is ultimately one of dissipation and idleness in the work God has appointed
- [Eph. 5:18](#) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is **dissipation**, but be filled with the Spirit,
 - These are symptomatic of Israel's sins, not the all inclusive list (see earlier lists)
 - Though God is not finished pronouncing woes, He nevertheless begins explaining what He is prepared to do in response

[Is. 5:13](#) ¶ Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge;
And their honorable men are famished,
And their multitude is parched with thirst.

[Is. 5:14](#) Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth without measure;

And Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry and the jubilant within her, descend into it.

[Is. 5:15](#) So the common man will be humbled and the man of importance abased,
The eyes of the proud also will be abased.

[Is. 5:16](#) But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment,
And the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.

[Is. 5:17](#) Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture,
And strangers will eat in the waste places of the wealthy.

- Therefore, His people go into exile
 - The word for exile is galah, which is to uncover or remove, specifically to carry away into captivity
 - This is their punishment for their lack of knowledge - a failure to heed God's word and the Covenant specifically
 - Just as with the vineyard, a chain of events will follow
 - The nation will see tremendous death
 - Sheol will have to enlarge its throat to swallow all that will come to it
 - And all that rich splendor drops in
 - The effect is to humble those proud men and women
 - And therefore the Lord will be exalted in His judgment of sin because He showed Himself holy in righteousness
 - God receives as much glory and honor when He performs His role of judge over sin as when He extends mercy and grace
 - They are two sides of the same coin
 - With one, you can't appreciate or even understand the other
 - In the end, the land will be empty of its people, and strangers will live there in their place

- The stinking grapes receive another round of woes as the chapter draws to a close

[Is. 5:18](#) ¶ Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood,
And sin as if with cart ropes;

[Is. 5:19](#) Who say, "Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it;

And let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near
And come to pass, that we may know it!"

[Is. 5:20](#) Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;
Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

[Is. 5:21](#) Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes
And clever in their own sight!

[Is. 5:22](#) Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine
And valiant men in mixing strong drink,

[Is. 5:23](#) Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!

- Isaiah presents another Shakespearean description here
 - God pronounces judgment on those who drag or pull behind themselves iniquity tied by their cords of lying and deceit like a ball and chain
 - And those cords are pulling carts like wheelbarrows full of their sin
 - Who mock God by demanding He show Himself and explain His purposes to their satisfaction
 - Judgment again to those who declare evil to be good and vice versa (very contemporary image)
 - Judgment again to those who think themselves wise and thus are clueless
 - And finally, judgment against those are esteemed (heroes = gibbor = mighty) within the culture for their exploits - hard living and injustice
 - They deny what is right to those under their control
- So here is God's pronouncement for Israel's coming judgment

[Is. 5:24](#) ¶ Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble
 And dry grass collapses into the flame,
 So their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust;
 For they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts
 And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

[Is. 5:25](#) On this account the anger of the LORD has burned against His people,
 And He has stretched out His hand against them and struck them down.
 And the mountains quaked, and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of
 the streets.

For all this His anger is not spent,
 But His hand is still stretched out.

[Is. 5:26](#) ¶ He will also lift up a standard to the distant nation,
 And will whistle for it from the ends of the earth;
 And behold, it will come with speed swiftly.

[Is. 5:27](#) No one in it is weary or stumbles,
 None slumbers or sleeps;
 Nor is the belt at its waist undone,
 Nor its sandal strap broken.

[Is. 5:28](#) Its arrows are sharp and all its bows are bent;
 The hoofs of its horses seem like flint and its chariot wheels like a whirlwind.

[Is. 5:29](#) Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions;
 It growls as it seizes the prey
 And carries it off with no one to deliver it.

[Is. 5:30](#) And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea.
 If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress;
 Even the light is darkened by its clouds.

- Verse 1 repeats the summation of their offenses
 - They have rejected God's word particularly in the form of the Law
 - On this account (v.2) they are bring judged
 - God takes action, leaving the ground shaking and many corpses
 - And yet, notice His anger is not spent even after this event takes place
 - There will be more anger to come (Tribulation)
 - Now more specifically, He lifts up a standard to a distant nation
 - A standard is nes, which is a sign or a banner
 - He beckons that foreign nation, in other words

- That nation is Babylon, about 100 years after Isaiah wrote this
- It came quickly as a dominant world power which God established expressly for this purpose - to judge Israel
- In verse 27, you see the singlemindedness and urgency of their arrival
 - They take no time to relax and pause
- It's a fierce military force, attacking with great effectiveness
 - Israel doesn't stand a chance
- Interestingly, it is compared twice to a lion
 - That carries off its prey
 - The symbol of the Babylon monarchy was the lion
- This is the event that begins the times of the Gentiles, which we will consider a little more next week when we see Isaiah's calling in chapter 6
 - Matthew 21:33-45 for comparison
 - Sin in Israel was the product of leadership
 - Led to destruction in the earlier day and now again
 - The Pharisees understood that too