

# The Branch Beautiful And Glorious

Isaiah's prophecy is full of the prophet looking forward to this gospel age in which we live. He calls it 'the last days' and 'the coming day of the Lord'. In today's passage we continue to dwell on his gospel theme. Seven times in these first few chapters Isaiah begins with, 'In that day'. He was speaking to the elect of his day; encouraging them with visions of our day and its gospel successes. The Lord used the gospel's power and expansion in our day to comfort downtrodden believers of past ages.

## **Christ set forth**

By this vision the Holy Spirit enlarged and enriched the understanding of the Old Testament church concerning the coming Messiah and His work to redeem His people from their sin. But Isaiah reveals, too, 'the glory that should follow' as Gentile believers are gathered into Christ's kingdom. These things were revealed to strengthen and comfort through anticipation the pressed and persecuted saints of old. They continue to speak to saints today by describing Christ's ongoing success and fruitfulness, and helping us to interpret what is going on around us in these last days.

## **A strange start**

Our opening verse speaks of seven women negotiating marriage terms with one man in order to take his name and remove their desolation at being without a husband. It pictures a time when men slain in battle left many widows. There is a delightful spiritual application here. Christ is Husband of the church and we are His Bride: but to come to Him for love and take His name we must first learn that grace is free. We must be disabused of every notion of bringing something to the marriage. Christ will give us all, or nothing.

## **The Righteous Branch**

Our Lord Jesus is the righteous branch that Jehovah caused to sprout, and promised to raise up in Zion. This speaks of Christ's deity. The Righteous Branch is a Messianic title employed in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zechariah. Christ is the 'rod out of the stem of Jesse'. God says, 'I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David', which is why the Saviour is called, the 'Son of David'.

## **'Beautiful and glorious'**

These terms describe Christ's divine nature and point to His covenant obligations and accomplishments. As Jesus is the 'altogether lovely' One and all-glorious in the estimation of His people, so too, His people are made beautiful and glorious in their covenant union with their Beloved Friend. What Christ is in Himself, we are made to be in Him. We are beautiful and glorious in Christ, not with the false beauty of chains, and bracelets, rings and nose jewels as described previously, but inwardly adorned with the beauty of Christ, the beauty of holiness.

## **Fruit of the earth**

In describing the Lord Jesus as the 'fruit of the earth', Isaiah also points to Christ's humanity; being born of Mary, and His prolific fruitfulness and abundance in bringing many sons, and daughters, to glory. Isaiah's descriptions of the Lord Jesus provided ample information, even then, for those with Holy Ghost insight and spiritual understanding to discern the true nature of the coming Messiah; both God and Man.

## **The remnant again**

Isaiah describes features of the future people of faith sufficient to encourage and delight his ancient audience amid their trials and distresses. The remnant people of God, those 'left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem', are the elect of God in every age, whom He has chosen, preserved, protected and redeemed, they 'shall be called holy'. Christ will have His Bride; dedicated, justified, sanctified, purified and 'most holy unto the Lord'. When the future seemed bleak for Judah, these promises of gospel enlargement brought hope.

## **Wisdom and passion**

Brothers and sisters, we are the people purged, washed and cleansed, not with water but by blood. We have a new spirit, a spirit of judgment to discern gospel truth, and a spirit of burning to stir up a passion for holy living and dedicated service. We come to Mount Zion, the kingdom of the great King. There we find rest, peace and protection, a covert from

the storm of this world's spiritual strife.

**We are a prophecy fulfilled**

When Isaiah set before his generation the words of God's revelation he told the saints about Jehovah's one great Righteous Branch, the Messiah, who would appear at the appointed time, 'In that day'. These Old Testament saints were also informed of the Messiah's many righteous children who would 'in that day' be gathered 'from the four winds' and brought into Zion as a great and holy nation. The elect in Isaiah's day were heartened and blessed by seeing both Christ and us. Today, we are heartened and blessed to be, by God's grace, amongst the fruit they foresaw.

Amen

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