

Dr. Allan MacRae, Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 5

Biblical Theological Seminary

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Isaiah 4-5

Messiah: the Branch; child born/son given [0:0]

And here then is it possible that the Messiah is also the branch that comes from the Lord and is also the fruit that comes from the earth (Isaiah 4)? The adjectives used with the second part of it are just as strong as the adjectives used in the first part of it. And we find that whether Isaiah understood this or not, he suggested the same thing where he said “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” Now that could simply be Hebrew parallelism. But the fact is that we have the two terms used one "born" and one "given," It is reasonable to consider these terms as suggesting the twofold nature of Christ. He is the second person of the trinity. He is God incarnate in human flesh. He is the branch of the Lord but he also is man. He had a human heritage, a human background a human lineage. He is the fruit of the earth as well as being the branch of the Lord. And so it seems to me that it is altogether reasonable to consider that we have the two aspects of Christ here predicted by Isaiah. I mention here Romans 1:3-4 because the apostle Paul brought out those two aspects so clearly there, though it is also done in many other places in the New Testament. I will just read the King James Version of those two verses: “Concerning his son, Jesus Christ our Lord who was made according to the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness.” Here we have the two aspects of the person of Christ. And so I believe we are justified in saying that we have them here in this verse of Isaiah.

The Divine Provision for Holiness [2:18]

Now we go on to capital B: which is "The divine provision for holiness." And that is unquestionably what is contained in Isaiah 4 verses 3 and 4. This point I might switch back to the passage and read chapter 4, verses 3 and 4: "and it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy. Even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion"--do you notice the daughters of Zion can make up with what precedes but it does not necessarily mean it is the same person. There is a contrast between those who are punished for their sins and those who are purged by the Lord, cleansed from their sin. And this cleansing ties right up here with their finding their joy and satisfaction through the branch of the Lord and the fruit of the earth. "He that is left in Zion and that remains in Jerusalem shall be called holy. Even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." One could take this as simply meaning that through the attacks of the enemy, through the great catastrophes they are going through they are going to be purged and cleanse and all who are left will be cleansed from their filth and will be finding their joy in the branch of the Lord and the fruit of the earth.

Christ's Atonement [4:05]

But one can equally well say it is looking forward to a later period contrasted with this earlier period. Contrasted with the sin of Isaiah's day there is to be a time when the Messiah, the one who is both God and man, will be the one who is wonderful and glorious and that will be a time when the Lord will have washed away the filth of his people and purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. It does not explicitly and clearly refer to Christ's atonement, but it certainly can be considered as such, for we certainly

have no real cleansing at any time except in some relation to Christ's atonement. So we have in these two verses the divine provision for holiness.

Divine Protection and Leadership for God's Children [4:56]

Then capital C. "Divine protection and leadership for God's children." I repeat, "Divine protection and leadership for God's children." There is quite a bit put into that title, and there are some things very definitely left out of it. Divine protection and leadership for God's children. We look at Isaiah 4 verses 5-6, "The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion and upon her assembly," this word, "assembly" is a word that does not apply something that is permanent it is more something that is temporary, people coming together, upon her assembly, "a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night." Anyone in Isaiah's day, or in fact anyone familiar with the Bible ever since, reading those phrases immediately thinks of the pilgrimage journey of the Israelites as they came from Egypt after being delivered from Egypt and going through the experience of the Passover there, as they were coming towards the promised land, how God puts over them a cloud of smoke by day and a flaming fire by night to guide them and to protect them. Remember, when they came to the Red sea, the Lord caused it that the pillar of fire should give them light, but that the cloud should hide them from the Egyptian forces who had followed them and were intending to destroy them. It gave them both leadership and protection. And so here we have a reference back to the exodus to the pilgrimage journey of the Israelites, when God led and protected them, and it is stated that there will be a similar protection for them, a similar leading for them stated as, "and upon all the glory shall be a defense" I don't know why the KJV uses the word "defense" at this particular place. The word is only translated "defense" once in the KJV, it is translated "chamber" once and "closet" once. It is derived from a verb, which would seem to me that which closes something in and protects

it. It is translated “canopy” in the NASB version and it is a word, that seems to suggest a sort of a temporary type of a protection.

The Multiple Meanings of the word “Tabernacle” (7:27)

And that idea is still further drawn out in the next verse (Isa. 4:6), “there shall be a tabernacle for a shelter.” Now this word “tabernacle” in the Bible doesn’t mean something put up to hold evangelistic services. This word “tabernacle” does not necessarily in itself imply a religious significance, but it does have the significance of something temporary. Very often in the Old Testament, the King James uses the word tabernacle to translate the word “Ohel” which means a tent, but in this case it is not that word, but the word “sukkah,” which means a booth. It is used where Jonah put up a little temporary structure to protect himself from the sun. It is used the Feast of Booths, it is a feast which is also called the Feast of Tabernacle. It is a time when among modern Jews they often in their backyards, put up a little temporary thing of branches and leaves to remind them of the wilderness journey and the way God protected them as they went through the desert. It is a temporary place, not a permanent place of living.

God’s Protection [8:42]

There will be a booth for a shadow in the daytime from the heat and for a place of refuge and for a cover from storm and from rain. Here is the divine leadership and divine protection of people thought of as pilgrims, but people who have been cleansed through the one who is both God and man. These people are here protected from the dangers that are round about them. They are protected from the storm from the rain from the heat of the sun. It is quite different from chapter 2. I asked you in the assignment from last time what verses in this chapter (chapter 4) show the removal of external danger and in this chapter I do not find anything that shows the removal of external danger. That is the clear emphasis in chapter 2--it is to be a period of complete removal of external danger. God has

promised that we can look forward to it and now it is going to come. But in chapter 4 we have something different; we have dangers round about. We do not have a permanent dwelling, we have temporary abodes, but we have God's protection and God's leadership to those who have been cleansed by "the spirit of burning and the spirit of judgment." And so it would seem to me one must say that verses 4 to 6 cannot look forward -- let's say versus 3 to 6--cannot look forward to the millennium but must look forward to a time when God's people are being particularly protected by him. A time when these people have been cleansed by the spirit of burning and the spirit of judgment. If we have only verses 3 to 6, we might very well say this reverses God's protection of Israel at some time during this history subsequent to the time of Isaiah. In the view of the fact that it is so closely connected with verse 2, which predicts the glory of the one who is both the "branch of the lord and the fruit of the earth." It would seem to me to be still more reasonable to say that it looks forward to those who find in him their glory and satisfaction; that it looks forward to them as they carry on their earthly journey in the midst of danger, of persecution, of difficulty and trouble, that God will give them guidance, leadership and protection whatever it comes, just as he did for the Israelites as they went through the wilderness.

Now, as between these two interpretations I would not wish to be dogmatic. If we did not have verse 2, if we only had verses 3 to 6, I would say that I could not decide between the two. I would not know which of the three might it be. In view of verses 2, it seems to me it is hard to escape the conclusion that, as Peter said, "they are looking forward to the Christ and to the glory that should follow" and that he is looking forward to the complete glory of the millennium, or the period that follows the millennium, or looking forward to the time of the pilgrim journey of each believer.

Chapter 5: Rebuke for Sin and Declaration of Coming Punishment [11:59]

So I think that at this point we can go on to chapter five, and in chapter five it seems to me the most important thing as we approach the chapter is to note that there is an important division in this chapter. First, the general subject of the whole chapter is rebuke for sin and declaration of coming punishment; that is the theme of the chapter as a whole. Nevertheless, it is true that the first seven verses deal with one specific parable or picture. And this picture is not referred to again in the chapter. There is no further reference to the Lord's vineyard or to the Lord's treatment of sins. So, while the whole chapter is dealing with God's condemnation of sin, of his people, verses 1-7 form a definite unit by themselves. I was disappointed to find some in the class who in the assignment divided these seven verses into one part, two parts, maybe three parts. It seems to me, the real division is between verses 7 and 8.

Isaiah 5:8 and Beyond: Rebuke and Punishment for Sin [13:18]

Now from verse 8 on, the direction I have suggested to you in looking at all the prophetic books, is a dealing with rebuke and a dealing with blessing for God's people. I think that the greater part of the prophetic books falls on to one of these two headings. And all of this falls under the head of rebuke. But under the subject of rebuke, we have material that deals particularly with pointing out and pointing to sin, and declaring God's unhappiness with their sin, his rebuke for their sin, and urging people to turn away from it. And we have passages in which he specifically predicts punishment for sin.

Now in this chapter the last part is very definitely dealing with punishment for sin. Look at verses 24-30. They are entirely dealing with punishment of sin. The fact that verse 25 ends with a phrase that is used as the end of several stanzas of a poem later in the book of Isaiah, leads people easily to think that there's an important break after verse 25, but actually the subject matter of verse 25 and that of the verses that follow are very closely related. From 24 on through, he is telling what God is going to cause, that there shall be great misery to come to the land,

when a fierce people, fierce and wildly aggressive people attack with the tremendous roaring like a lion and roar against the people of Judah like the roaring of the sea, and if you look to the land you behold darkness. So there is punishment from verse 24 on.

But in the part from verse 8 – 23, you have largely rebuked sin. You also have certain verses that deal with punishment, verses 9- 10 for instance, 9 and 10 coming after telling them in verse 8 about the wrong of covetousness and selfishness in trying to build up tremendous estates. He then goes on to say that many houses will become desolate, without inhabitants, and that the land will produce very, very little. That is definitely punishment.

Interpreting Isaiah 5:13-17 : Punishment for Sin [15:41]

Then Isaiah goes on with various types of sins, then rebuke, and then in verses 13-17 again you have punishments for their sins. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity" He writes. Does this describe what happened in Isaiah's days when many people were taken via Damascus by Sennacherib into captivity or does it look forward to the future days when the whole nation would go into captivity? We cannot say. Of course in English, we translate this passage differently depending on which way you take it. But, we don't know for sure how the author meant it. He may have been looking forward to the Assyrian conquest, but may also be including later conquests and attacks. Some commentators think this passage does not refer to the Assyrian conquest. Note the phrase "many nations," but the Assyrians had conquered many nations and had their forces made up of people from many nations. So it could conceivably be a reference to the Assyrian conquest. It could, however, refer to the Babylonian conquest; it could refer to the Persian conquest, or to the later coming of the Hellenistic empire, or the Roman Empire, which was made up of people from many nations under Roman control. There is no conclusive proof that one would be wrong or say that the last few verses of the chapter were pointing forward to a terrible catastrophe for Israel

towards the end of the age. That is not impossible, but there's nothing in the passage that requires it. It could point forward to matters that have already happened.

Isaiah Chapter 5's Connection to Today [17:29]

Some of these woes in this chapter, against particular sins, I think, are very appropriate to our day. Look at verse 20, "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter". What a picture of the relativity of the present day. When people use words in the exact opposite sense in which they are usually taken. I see its time to quit. I've just mentioned that this first parable of the Lord's vineyard is the background of a parable that our Lord gave in the New Testament, which is quoted in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and therefore of special interest. Next time, the first half hour we will have a little test on what we have done thus far and then we will continue.

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MacRae, Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 5

1. Isaiah 4:

- A. The Messiah is the branch and the fruit of the earth
 - 1. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa. 9:6)
 - suggesting the two-fold nature of Christ (human and divine)
 - 2. Rom 1:3-4 "Concerning his son, Jesus Christ our Lord who was made according to the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness."
 - 2 aspects of the person of Christ.
- B. The divine provision for holiness
 - 1. Isaiah 4:3-4: "and it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion and he that remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy. Even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion"
 - 2. Is this simply that through the attacks of the enemy and catastrophes this will happen?
 - 3. Possibly looking forward to later period when Messiah will wash away the filth of his people --Christ's atonement
- C. Divine protection and leadership for God's children (Isa. 4:5-6)
 - 1. "The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion and upon her assembly"
 - Assembly: something temporary gathering
 - 2. "A cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night."
 - a. Images back to pilgrimage journey of the Israelites as they came out of Egypt led into the wilderness by cloud of smoke by day and flaming fire by night
 - b. Symbol of leadership and protection
 - 3. KJV says "and upon all the glory shall be a defense"
 - but the word for "defense" better translated "canopy"
 - temporary protection (vid. NASB, NIV)
 - 4. "there shall be a tabernacle for a shelter"
 - a) Tabernacle not evangelistic tabernacle
 - b) Temporary shelter not "ohel"=tent but "sukkah" = a booth
 - c) Used by Jonah to get relief from the sun and Feast of Booths --showing God's protection in the wilderness journey. --Temporary dwelling place
 - d) Booth signifies divine leadership and protection for his pilgrim people
 - 5. Contrast with Chapter 2

- a) Isa. 2 there was a removal of external danger
Isa. 4 we have dangers around and no permanent dwelling
- b) Thus Isa 4:3-6 not millennial but look forward to a time when God's people are particularly protected in history
- c) Isa 4:2 looks like millennium but may be referring to a time of pilgrimage for each believer or subsequent point in Israel's history

5. Isaiah 5

- A. Chapter about rebuke for sin and coming punishment
 - 1. Definite unit: 5:1-7 Lord's vineyard --a parable or picture
 - 2. Real division comes between verse 7 and 8 --when rebuke for sin picks up
 - 3. Prophetic books: rebuke and God's blessing two main themes
 - 4. Verses 24-30 look forward to punishment for sin, misery of the land and attack by aggressive adversaries
 - 5. Verses 8-23 largely rebuke for sin...covetousness and selfishness
 - 6. Verses 13-17 punishment for sins
"Therefore my people are gone into captivity"
Is this in Isaiah's day? Which captivity?
Assyrian conquest
Babylonian exile
Persians, Greek or Roman
 - 7. Application to today: 5:20 "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil."
a) Fits modern relativity where words are taken in their exact opposite sense
 - 8. Vineyard fits with our Lord's parable of the vineyards in Matthew, Mark and Luke... next time