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## The Branch of the LORD Will Be Beautiful and Glorious 4: 2-4

The branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious **DIG: The Branch of the LORD** motif is used by Jesus (John 15:1-5), as well as other prophets (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12). How does Jesus' use of it differ from the way Isaiah uses it here? What does that say about who the true Branch of the LORD is? What did the women of Zion represent? In what ways were they not separating themselves from the world? What message would that send to the nations around them? How would those survivors, who earlier had been characterized by gross sin, now become holy? Is it by human effort? Or by some other means?

**REFLECT:** Why is the Branch of the LORD important to you today? How do we become part of this Branch? What does it mean to be holy? How does one become holy today? In what ways do you find it difficult to be separate from the world? If you were accused of being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? How can you be certain?

**In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the Land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel (4:2).**

In spite of the coming severe judgment, **God's** blessing would eventually come. Sometimes, **in that day** refers to **the near historical fulfillment** of the Babylonian invasion and destruction of **Jerusalem** (as seen in **3:18**), but other times, depending on the context, it refers to **the far eschatological fulfillment** of the Messianic Kingdom (as seen in **2:12** and **17, 3:7** and **4:1**). When **ADONAI** gives **Isra'el** glory, then **she** will know **her** true greatness, the greatness that eluded her when **she** tried to produce that glory for **herself**.



Traditionally, **beginning with the Targum, the Branch of the LORD, who will be beautiful and glorious**, has been interpreted as **the Messiah** since this is its meaning in **Jeremiah 23:5** and **33:15**; **Zechariah 3:8** and **6:12**. The term **Branch** is fitting because **the Messiah** sprouted **from David's line (Jeremiah 33:15a)**, and points to the divine nature of **the Branch**. **Isaiah** introduces the motif of the doctrine of the **Branch of the LORD**, which **he** will develop later in **Chapter 11**. **Isaiah** says that **the fruit of the Land will be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel**, the Jews who survive the Great Tribulation. Of all those Jews who enter the Great Tribulation, only one-third will survive (**Zechariah 13:8-9**).

The nation, which had gradually become distant from **God** in moral character, will become holy in the messianic Kingdom. The purpose of judgment and redemption is that people should become more like **the LORD**. Indeed, that was the purpose of the exodus and the giving of the Torah. **God's** desire is that we should be set apart: **Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy (Leviticus 19:2)**. It also means that we become **His** possession. Consequently, the seven objects in the Tabernacle were **holy** and were not for common use (**Leviticus 10:1-11**).

But to be **holy** also means that we exhibit a distinctive character. The so-called Holiness Code in **Leviticus, Chapters 17** through **26** stresses that it is through the development of certain kinds of ethical behavior that people demonstrate the holiness of **the LORD (James 1:22)**. We are supposed to influence the world, not have the world influence us. Paul gets at this idea of separation when he talks about marriage. **He** says: **Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the Temple of God and idols? For we are the Temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people."** Therefore, **come out from them and**

**be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you (Second Corinthians 6:14-17). Isra'el**, however, continued to fail to cultivate such ethical behavior. In fact, **she** seemed incapable of doing it. What should be done?

**Isaiah**, along with the other prophets, saw hope through the judgment of sin. This would be the cleansing process. Through the fiery judgment, a small believing remnant would emerge. They would realize why the verdict had come and turn away from their sins that had brought the judgment in the first place (**Ezeki'el 36:25-26, 39:23-26; Dani'el 9:4-19**). **Isaiah** had personally experienced the purging by fire (**6:6-7**), and **he** knew it was really a gift from **God Himself**. For without it, we would be lost.

**Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy (4:3a)**. The mark of distinction for surviving **Isra'el** will be holiness, not wealth or prestige. They will be washed clean by **the blood of the Lamb** (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Cf - You Are Worthy To Take The Scroll**), because sin cannot be cleansed apart from the shedding of blood. **In fact, the Torah requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22, also see Leviticus 16:11-19, 17:11; Isaiah 53:12 and Matthew 26:28)**. According to **Zechariah**, it is through **the Branch** that the guilt of **Judah** will be washed away (**Zechariah 3:8-9**), and a fountain opened for the cleansing of her sin and uncleanness (**Zechariah 13:1**).

**All who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem will be called holy (4:3b)**. The doctrine of salvation states **God** chose us because **He** knew that we would choose **Him**. People's names are entered into **the Lamb's book of life**-including the names of babies or children who die before they can understand the Gospel (**Second Samuel 12:22-23**) in response to the choices they have made. In no sense is salvation the result of human initiative. We are, as it were, dead at the bottom of a spiritual lake. We are lost. **The LORD** had to make the first move toward us, which **He** did when **He** sent **His Son** to die for our sins (**John 3:16**). Now we are saved because we responded to **His** divine plan. But those who will not respond will remain spiritually dead and will not be saved.

**ADONAI will wash away the filth, literally meaning vomit, of the women of Zion; He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of fire (4:4)**. Every one of their names is written in **the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 3:5; 20:12, 15, 21:27; Philippians 4:3)**. The cause of **their** holiness is that **the filth of the Jewish women** is washed away. That answers the problem of the indictment and **judgment** of the Jewish women (**3:16-4:1**). **The bloodstains of Jerusalem** will also be

purged, answering the problem of the indictment and **judgment** of the Jewish leaders (2:22-3:15).

How do you get your name in **the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27)**? Does **the LORD** choose us, or do we choose **Him**? The answer is, well, yes. It is an antinomy, meaning two things that are seemingly polar opposites, but both are true. It is an apparent contradiction that really isn't one. In the case of election, two truths both can be supported by Scripture, but cannot be reconciled from the human point of view. It is like two sides of the same coin. On one side **God** chooses us, as seen in **Romans Chapter 9**; on the other side, we choose **God**, as seen in **Romans Chapter 10**. Two sides of the same coin: **ADONAI** has chosen us before the foundation of the earth to be holy (**Ephesians 1:4; First Peter 1:20**), but we can say no to **God** and make it stick (**Matthew 23:37; John 3:16**). When asked the question, what shall we do with an antinomy? The famous Canadian theologian J. I. Packer said, "Accept it for what it is and learn to live with it." I think that is good advice in this life because now **we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror**; however, when we get to heaven, **then we will see the LORD face to face** and **He** can explain it all to us (**First Corinthians 13:12**).

But even after we decide to believe in **Messiah**, our efforts alone will not be able to **wash away** our sin. **The Ruach ha-Kodesh** is **the One** who did the purging of **the Jewish women and the leaders of Jerusalem**. **The Hebrew uses the singular in both cases to denote the people collectively**. John the Baptist said that **Yeshua** would **baptize . . . with fire (Matthew 3:11)**; that is, to purify the nation.