

# **CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### **Isaiah Chapter 4 — The Branch of the Lord and Zion's Cleansing**

#### **A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible**

##### **Introduction**

Isaiah Chapter 4 is short, but it is filled with hope.

Chapter 3 ended with:

Judgment.

Loss.

Humiliation.

Death.

Desolation.

Chapter 4 begins in the aftermath of that devastation.

The population has been reduced.

Social stability has collapsed.

Disgrace hangs over the people.

Yet God does not end His message with ruin.

He turns the reader toward:

Restoration.

Holiness.

Cleansing.

Messianic hope.

Divine presence.

Protection.

The chapter introduces one of Isaiah's important messianic images:

“The Branch of the Lord.”

This Branch is described as:

Beautiful.

Glorious.

Connected with restoration.

The faithful remnant will survive.

Those remaining in Zion will be called:

Holy.

But restoration requires cleansing.

God must wash away:

Filth.

Bloodguilt.

Corruption.

He does this through:

Judgment.

Purifying fire.

Then God's presence returns in imagery that recalls Israel's wilderness journey.

There is:

Cloud by day.

Fire by night.

Glory covering the people.

Shelter.

Shade.

Refuge.

Protection from storms.

The chapter therefore moves from:

Disgrace.

To:

Glory.

From:

Defilement.

To:

Holiness.

From:

Judgment.

To:

Restoration.

From:

Exposure.

To:

Divine covering.

The central truth of Isaiah 4 is:

After judgment has removed pride and corruption, God promises to preserve a holy remnant, cleanse Zion from guilt, reveal the glory of the Branch of the Lord, and cover His restored people with His protective presence.

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# **I. THE AFTERMATH OF JUDGMENT PRODUCES DESPERATION**

## **Isaiah 4:1 — “Take Away Our Disgrace”**

“In that day seven women will take hold of one man, saying, ‘We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; just let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace.’”

This verse continues directly from the judgment described in Isaiah 3.

Many men have died in battle.

The social consequences are severe.

The image of seven women seeking one man emphasizes:

Population loss.

Desperation.

Social disruption.

The women even offer to provide their own:

Food.

Clothing.

They simply want:

His name.

The removal of reproach.

## **Cross References**

Genesis 30:23

After Rachel finally conceived and gave birth, she said that God had removed the disgrace she had carried because of her barrenness.

Luke 1:25

Elizabeth said that the Lord had shown her favor and removed the reproach she had experienced among the people.

Ruth 1:20

Naomi asked people to call her Mara rather than Naomi because she felt that great bitterness had come upon her life.

## **Spiritual Principle**

Sin and judgment often create consequences far beyond the original act of rebellion.

## **Key Truth**

A society's spiritual decline eventually affects ordinary people in painful and personal ways.

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# **II. THE BRANCH OF THE LORD WILL BE BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS**

## **Isaiah 4:2 — Hope Appears After Judgment**

“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 those in Israel who survive.”

The chapter suddenly shifts from humiliation to hope.

The phrase:

“The Branch of the Lord”

becomes important in prophetic Scripture.

The Branch points toward God's promised ruler and Messiah.

Isaiah's prophecy looks beyond immediate devastation toward a future restoration under God's appointed King.

The Branch will be:

Beautiful.

Glorious.

The survivors of Israel will experience restored blessing.

## **Cross References**

Jeremiah 23:5

The Lord promises that the days are coming when He will raise up a righteous Branch from David's line. He will reign as King, act wisely, and establish justice and righteousness in the land.

Zechariah 3:8

God tells Joshua the high priest and those with him that they are signs of what is coming, because God will bring forth His Servant called the Branch.

Jeremiah 33:15

God promises that in the appointed time He will cause a righteous Branch to grow from David's family, and this ruler will practice justice and righteousness.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God can cause hope to grow from what appears ruined.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Judgment may cut down human pride, but it cannot cut off God's promises.

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# **III. THE SURVIVING REMNANT WILL BE CALLED HOLY**

## **Isaiah 4:3 — Those Recorded Among the Living**

“Everyone who remains in Zion and is left in Jerusalem will be called holy—all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem.”

Not everyone is destroyed.

A remnant remains.

Those who survive are called:

Holy.

This means:

Set apart.

Belonging to God.

Purified for His purposes.

The verse also speaks of people:

“recorded among the living.”

This emphasizes God’s knowledge of His own.

## **Cross References**

Daniel 12:1

Daniel is told that a time of severe distress will come, but everyone among God’s people whose name is found written in the book will be delivered.

Revelation 21:27

Nothing impure will enter the holy city, nor anyone practicing what is shameful or false; only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will enter.

Luke 10:20

Jesus told His disciples not to rejoice merely because spiritual powers submitted to them, but to rejoice that their names were written in heaven.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God knows those who belong to Him.

## **Key Truth**

The mark of God’s restored people is not merely survival.

It is holiness.

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# **IV. GOD WASHES AWAY ZION’S FILTH**

## **Isaiah 4:4 — Cleansing Through Judgment and Fire**

“The Lord will wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleanse the bloodstains of Jerusalem from her midst by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire.”

Isaiah 3 described the pride and corruption of Zion.

Isaiah 4 describes cleansing.

God will wash away:

Filth.

Bloodguilt.

Moral corruption.

This cleansing comes through:

Judgment.

Fire.

Fire here is not merely destructive.

It is refining.

God removes what contaminates His people.

### **Cross References**

Malachi 3:2

The coming Lord is compared to a refiner's fire and cleansing soap because His presence exposes impurity and purifies what belongs to Him.

Ezekiel 36:25

God promises to sprinkle clean water upon His people, cleanse them from impurity, and free them from the defilement of idols.

Zechariah 13:1

A fountain will be opened for God's people to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God does not restore His people by pretending corruption does not matter.

He cleanses it.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Grace does not preserve our filth.

Grace washes it away.

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## **V. GOD'S GLORY RETURNS AS A COVERING**

### **Isaiah 4:5 — Cloud by Day and Fire by Night**

“Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who gather there a cloud of smoke by day and a glowing fire by night; over everything the glory will be a covering.”

The imagery immediately recalls Israel's wilderness journey.

God guided Israel through:

Cloud by day.

Fire by night.

That presence meant:

Guidance.

Protection.

Direction.

Assurance.

God was with them.

Now Isaiah pictures restored Zion under the same divine presence.

Most striking is the phrase:

“the glory will be a covering.”

Earlier:

Sin exposed shame.

Now:

God's glory covers His people.

## **Cross References**

Exodus 13:21

The Lord went before Israel during the day in a pillar of cloud to guide them and during the night in a pillar of fire to give them light so they could continue traveling.

Exodus 13:22

The pillar of cloud remained with the people by day, and the pillar of fire remained with them by night.

Exodus 40:38

The cloud of the Lord rested over the tabernacle during the day, and fire was visible within it at night before all Israel throughout their journeys.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God's greatest gift to His restored people is His own presence.

## **Key Truth**

Protection is strongest when the Protector Himself is present.

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# VI. GOD BECOMES THEIR SHELTER AND REFUGE

## Isaiah 4:6 — Protection from Heat and Storm

“It will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, a place of refuge, and a hiding place from storm and rain.”

The chapter ends with security.

God’s presence becomes:

Shade.

Shelter.

Refuge.

Hiding place.

The people who were once exposed to judgment now rest under divine protection.

### Cross References

Psalms 121:5

The Lord Himself watches over you and remains close beside you like protective shade.

Psalms 121:6

The sun will not overpower you by day, nor will the dangers associated with the night ultimately destroy you under God’s keeping care.

Psalms 91:1

The person who dwells in the shelter of the Most High rests safely under the protective shadow of the Almighty.

### Spiritual Principle

God does not merely cleanse His people.

He keeps them.

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

The same God who washes away sin becomes the refuge of the cleansed sinner.

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# VII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 4

## 1. Judgment Has Real Consequences

Verse 1 shows the social aftermath of the judgment described in Chapter 3.

### **Principle:**

Sin affects more than the person committing it.

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## 2. God Preserves Hope After Judgment

The Branch appears after devastation.

### **Principle:**

God's promises survive even when human pride collapses.

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## 3. The Branch Points Toward the Messiah

The prophetic Branch is connected with Davidic kingship, righteousness, and restoration.

### **Principle:**

God's ultimate answer to human failure is His appointed King.

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## 4. God Preserves a Remnant

Some remain in Zion.

### **Principle:**

Judgment does not cancel God's covenant purposes.

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## 5. God's People Are Called to Holiness

The survivors are called:

Holy.

### **Principle:**

Restoration is not merely returning to comfort; it is returning to consecration.

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## **6. God Cleanses What He Restores**

The filth and bloodguilt must be washed away.

### **Principle:**

God's restoration includes purification.

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## **7. God's Presence Becomes the People's Refuge**

Cloud.

Fire.

Shade.

Shelter.

### **Principle:**

The greatest security is not found in circumstances but in God's presence.

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# **VIII. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT THE MESSIAH**

The Branch becomes one of the important messianic themes of the prophets.

Jeremiah speaks of a righteous Branch from David.

Zechariah calls God's coming Servant:

The Branch.

Isaiah will later develop related imagery of new growth from David's line.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Human leadership repeatedly fails.

God ultimately provides the righteous King humanity needs.

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# **IX. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT THE REMNANT**

Isaiah repeatedly emphasizes survivors.

God's judgment is serious.

Yet He preserves people through it.

The remnant demonstrates:

Grace.

Faithfulness.

Covenant preservation.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

When most people turn away, God still knows those who remain faithful.

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## **X. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT HOLINESS**

The survivors are called:

Holy.

God does not merely say:

“They survived.”

He says:

They are set apart.

### **Key Truth**

God’s goal is not simply to get us through difficulty.

His goal is to make us holy.

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## **XI. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT CLEANSING**

Verse 4 uses strong language.

Wash.

Cleanse.

Judgment.

Fire.

The problem is deep.

Therefore the cleansing must be real.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God's forgiveness is never permission to continue cherishing the filth He wants removed.

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## **XII. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT JUDGMENT**

Judgment and restoration are not opposites in this chapter.

God uses judgment to remove corruption.

Then restoration follows.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Sometimes what feels like loss is God removing what cannot remain in a restored life.

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## **XIII. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S PRESENCE**

The cloud and fire remind us of the Exodus.

God's presence means:

He guides.

He protects.

He remains.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God's presence is more valuable than the absence of difficulty.

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## **XIV. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT PROTECTION**

God promises protection from:

Heat.

Storm.

Rain.

That does not mean His people will never encounter difficulty.

It means difficulty will not exist outside His sovereign care.

### **Key Truth**

Refuge does not mean storms never come.

It means there is somewhere safe to stand when they do.

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## **XV. WHAT ISAIAH 4 TEACHES ABOUT RESTORATION**

The chapter moves through a beautiful progression:

Disgrace.

Branch.

Holiness.

Cleansing.

Glory.

Shelter.

That is restoration.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

God's restoration does more than return what was lost.

It transforms what remains.

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## **XVI. CHRIST AND THE BRANCH OF THE LORD**

Christians have historically understood the Branch prophecies in light of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament presents the Branch as:

Davidic.

Righteous.

Royal.

Restorative.

Jesus fulfills the hope of the righteous King who comes from David's line.

Yet Isaiah 4 also speaks directly to Zion's future cleansing and restoration.

Both themes belong in the prophecy.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The hope of restoration ultimately rests not in human leaders but in God's Messiah.

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## **XVII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY**

### **Question 1**

How does Isaiah 4 connect with Isaiah 3?

Verse 1 continues the social consequences of the judgment described at the end of Chapter 3.

### **Question 2**

Why are seven women pictured seeking one man?

The image emphasizes the devastating population loss and social disorder resulting from judgment.

### **Question 3**

What is the Branch of the Lord?

It is prophetic imagery associated with God's promised righteous ruler and the hope ultimately fulfilled in the Messiah.

### **Question 4**

Why is the Branch called beautiful and glorious?

Because God's promised King stands in complete contrast to the corrupt leadership and pride condemned in previous chapters.

### **Question 5**

Who are those called holy?

Those who remain in Zion after God's purifying judgment and belong to His restored people.

### **Question 6**

What does it mean to be "recorded among the living"?

It emphasizes God's knowledge, preservation, and recognition of those who belong to Him.

## **Question 7**

What does God wash away?

The moral filth and bloodguilt of Jerusalem.

## **Question 8**

Why are judgment and fire mentioned in connection with cleansing?

Because God's holiness exposes, removes, and refines corruption.

## **Question 9**

What does the cloud and fire imagery recall?

It recalls God's presence with Israel during the wilderness journey after the Exodus.

## **Question 10**

What does God's glory become?

A covering over His restored people.

## **Question 11**

What does the shelter in verse 6 communicate?

It communicates protection, refuge, and security under God's presence.

## **Question 12**

What should Isaiah 4 change in us?

It should cause us to trust God's Messiah, desire holiness, accept God's cleansing work, and seek security in His presence rather than temporary human supports.

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# **XVIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION**

Isaiah 4 asks several searching questions.

## **What Disgrace Do I Want God to Remove?**

Am I trying merely to hide shame?

Or am I allowing God to deal with its root?

## **Is Christ My Hope?**

When human leaders fail, where does my confidence rest?

## **Do I Desire Holiness?**

Do I merely want relief from consequences?

Or do I want to become spiritually clean?

## **What Needs to Be Washed Away?**

Is there:

Pride?

Bitterness?

Impurity?

Dishonesty?

Idolatry?

Unforgiveness?

## **Am I Resisting God's Refining Work?**

What if the fire is removing something that cannot remain?

## **Where Do I Look for Protection?**

Money?

People?

Possessions?

Or God's presence?

## **Do I Trust God in the Storm?**

Do I believe He can be my refuge when circumstances become difficult?

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# **XIX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

## **“God Does Not Merely Rescue Us From Judgment—He Cleanses Us for His Presence”**

Isaiah 4 does not stop at:

Survival.

It moves toward:

Holiness.

God cleanses His people because He intends to dwell among them.

**Principle:**

God's purpose is not merely to make life easier; it is to make His people holy and bring them near to Himself.

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## **XX. FROM DISGRACE TO GLORY**

Verse 1 speaks of:

Disgrace.

Verse 5 speaks of:

Glory.

That movement summarizes the chapter.

Human sin produces shame.

God's restoring work produces glory.

**Spiritual Principle**

God can write a different ending than sin appears to promise.

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## **XXI. THE BRANCH AFTER THE CUTTING DOWN**

The previous chapters have described judgment as though everything proud is being cut down.

Yet:

A Branch appears.

That picture is powerful.

Something living comes from apparent devastation.

**Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Never mistake pruning for the end of God's purpose.

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## XXII. HOLY AFTER JUDGMENT

The survivors are not simply called:

Fortunate.

Lucky.

Strong.

They are called:

Holy.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The greatest evidence of restoration is not prosperity.

It is transformed character.

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## XXIII. THE SPIRIT OF JUDGMENT AND FIRE

Fire can:

Destroy.

But fire can also:

Refine.

Purify.

Remove contamination.

Isaiah uses this image to show God's holy work.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

God loves His people too deeply to leave destructive impurities untouched.

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## XXIV. THE GLORY AS A COVERING

Earlier chapters exposed:

Sin.

Pride.

Shame.

Now God provides a covering of glory.

This is not a covering that hides unrepented corruption.

The cleansing occurs first.

Then:

Glory covers.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God's covering follows God's cleansing.

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## **XXV. CLOUD BY DAY, FIRE BY NIGHT**

This imagery reaches backward to Exodus.

Israel once traveled through the wilderness under God's presence.

Now Isaiah presents Zion under the same kind of divine care.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The God who guided His people before remains able to guide His people again.

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## **XXVI. SHELTER IN THE HEAT**

The desert sun could be dangerous.

Shade represented life and relief.

God Himself provides covering.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God understands the environments that exhaust His people and provides grace appropriate to the need.

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## **XXVII. REFUGE IN THE STORM**

Verse 6 does not promise:

No storms.

It promises:

Refuge.

This distinction matters.

The Christian life is not the elimination of every storm.

It is life under the care of God in every storm.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Faith does not say:

“No storm can come.”

Faith says:

“No storm can remove me from God’s care.”

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## **XXVIII. FIVE GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISAIAH 4**

### **1. Disgrace**

Judgment leaves painful consequences.

### **2. Hope**

The Branch appears.

### **3. Holiness**

The remnant is set apart.

### **4. Cleansing**

Sin and bloodguilt are washed away.

### **5. Presence**

God covers His people with glory and refuge.

### **Key Truth**

God’s restoration moves His people from shame toward holiness and from exposure toward His presence.

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## **XXIX. FINAL APPLICATION**

Isaiah Chapter 4 is only six verses long.

But its message is enormous.

Chapter 3 leaves Jerusalem devastated.

Pride has been stripped away.

Leadership has failed.

War has taken lives.

The city mourns.

Then:

God speaks hope.

The Branch appears.

This teaches us something essential.

Judgment is not stronger than God's promise.

Failure is not stronger than God's grace.

Human corruption cannot cancel God's purpose.

The Branch will come.

God will preserve a remnant.

But restoration requires cleansing.

God does not say:

"Let us simply forget the sin."

He washes away:

Filth.

Bloodguilt.

Corruption.

He uses:

Judgment.

Fire.

That may sound severe.

But holiness matters.

Then something remarkable happens.

God's presence returns.

Cloud by day.

Fire by night.

Glory as a covering.

Shade from the heat.

Refuge from the storm.

The people who had lost nearly everything receive something greater:

God Himself with them.

That is the heart of restoration.

God does not merely give:

Better circumstances.

He gives:

His presence.

Therefore:

Do not fear God's cleansing work.

Let Him remove what is corrupt.

Do not cling to the dross.

Do not confuse discipline with abandonment.

Do not believe devastation means God has lost control.

Look for the Branch.

Look for His promise.

Seek holiness.

Welcome cleansing.

Rest beneath His glory.

And remember:

The God who leads through the wilderness is also the God who shelters from the storm.

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## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that judgment is not the final word for those who belong to You.

Thank You for the hope of the Branch.

Thank You for Jesus Christ, the righteous King and promised Messiah.

When human leaders fail, remind us that Christ does not fail.

When earthly kingdoms shake, remind us that His kingdom remains.

Father, make us holy.

Do not merely remove difficult circumstances.

Remove sin.

Wash away:

Pride.

Impurity.

Bitterness.

Dishonesty.

Selfishness.

Idolatry.

Anything that keeps us from walking closely with You.

Refine us.

If there is dross in our lives, remove it.

Give us humility to receive Your correction.

Thank You that You know those who belong to You.

Thank You that our names are known in heaven.

Help us live as people set apart for You.

Father, cover us with Your presence.

Be our cloud in the day.

Be our fire in the night.

Guide us when we do not know the way.

Protect us when danger surrounds us.

Give us shade when the heat becomes exhausting.

Give us refuge when storms come.

Give us a hiding place when life feels overwhelming.

Teach us that the greatest blessing is not always the removal of difficulty.

Sometimes the greatest blessing is knowing:

You are with us.

Restore what sin has damaged.

Remove disgrace.

Create holiness.

Bring glory.

And let our lives testify that the God who judges sin is also the God who cleanses, restores, protects, and saves.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

## Key Verse

“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 those in Israel who survive.” — Isaiah 4:2

## Central Truth

After judgment removes pride and corruption, God promises to reveal the glory of His Branch, preserve a holy remnant, cleanse Zion from sin and bloodguilt, and cover His restored people with His guiding, protecting, and sheltering presence.

## Isaiah 4 in One Sentence

Isaiah moves from the shame left by judgment to the hope of the glorious Branch, showing that God will preserve a holy remnant, wash away Zion's corruption, restore His presence, and become the shelter and refuge of His cleansed people.