

Isaiah's Use of the word "Branch" or Nazarene

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Preface

This study is much better viewed with the actual Hebrew script so that the comparisons are evident. There is Hebrew text with transliteration here. If the Hebrew text is unfamiliar and confusing to you the you should read the previous article with just the transliterated Hebrew words and their explanation.

Interpretation of prophesy is necessarily mystical and miraculous by its very nature. The boundaries of time and eternity were broken in the moment when the Almighty told us the future before it was lived.. As an example in Isaiah one of these startling moments is the naming of Cyrus as the one who would rebuild the temple. The precognitive details are given not only before Cyrus lived but before the nation was taken captive and the temple destroyed by the Babylonians. Thus, peering into prophecy is like peering into the transcendental moment. When success is the companion of the one seeking for truth to be revealed that is not readily available on the surface it is a semi-mystical experience. However, the interpreter of prophecy is not like those who follow the Khabbalah. The student of Khabbalah looks for special revelation in hidden meanings under the words themselves. Khabbalah as a system discards the natural meaning, and a different mysticism, which is more akin to spiritism, with specters and ghostly apparitions is a possible accoutrement to the discovery of the second and, to him, more important, Khabbalah, or "hidden meaning." I reject the concept of hidden meaning in the sense of Khabbalah. The true interpreter of prophecy seeks, in the visions, a transportation beyond the natural ordinary experiences. But he seeks by natural and ordinary means of studying the literal meaning of written prophetic words that were written in a precognitive time frame. He then goes on to discover their fulfillment in historical time. The experience of connecting the precognitive and the historical is mystical and can leave one with the feeling of having touched eternity.

What follows therefore is not a venture into mystical non-reality but an attempt to get further meaning in prophesy from the literal meaning of the actual text in the Hebrew language that defies translation. Isaiah has many nuances that can not be translated. These are usually associated with an ironic "play on words." This characteristic of style is a major literary mechanism in the style of Isaiah's writing.

Isaiah is noted for poetic hyperbole and the use of play on words. The meaning of the text is often dependent on these untranslatable literary devices. Some times these are merely rhyming words which do not rhyme in translation and therefore the play upon words is missed. At other occasions there is the use of "double meaning" (*double entendre*) or a similarity in sound and meaning that continues the idea in the context of a passage as the form of the word may continue to be used in the passage to carry along what is being spoken about.(This is noticed by Keil and Delitch's commentary on Isaiah in the use of the terms that are repeated in Isaiah 8:22 - 9:1. There is a play on the words mu'aph and mutasaq , that are properly commented on by Keil as such a play on similar sounding and similar meaning words.) When the device of "double entendre" is connected to words that

have similar written configuration and /or sound it is not possible to show it in translation as the translated words will have no such similarities and the original meaning is obscured or at least less certain, unless we are told. The literary device of "play on words" is more pronounced in Isaiah than any other prophet. Rawlinson says:

"Play upon words is also a common feature in Hebrew literature but only a few of the sacred writers use it so frequently or give it such prominence as Isaiah...As, however, this ornament, depending generally on the assonance of the Hebrew words, is necessarily lost in translation and can only be appreciated by a Hebrew scholar, we do not propose further to dwell on it."*

Even though the subtlety of the use of play on words is lost in translation it should not be thought of as an ornament. It is a part of the inspired thought process and in at least one case it is a vehicle of miraculous revelation. Isaiah's use of the word translated "branch" in 11:1 is almost kabbalahistic. The word has a great variety of possible translations. Euphonically it is linked to Nazarene, Nazarenes, or Nazareth. It is translated keep, keeping, kept, watchman, watchers, besieged, preserve, preserver, subtle, hidden things, monuments, and branch. In the majority of places it is translated as "keep," in the sense of guarding and keeping something safe. It is translated "branch" in Isaiah three times and once in Daniel. Isaiah's use of the word is startling to a believer and must at least raise interest in the incredulous. When Isaiah uses the word, there is an almost complete possibility of "double meaning" or "play on words" in contexts that are obviously messianic. Invariably they point to Jesus as the Messiah because of his connection with Nazareth and because he is called "the Nazarene" even by his detractors. Matthew had reference to Isaiah's use of the word when he said that Jesus's home town of Nazareth was a fulfillment of the prophets.

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

There is no prophet in the Old Testament who states the Messiah will be called a Nazarene! Matthew also says that the birth at Bethlehem fulfilled "that which was spoken by the prophet." A verse can be found where this is recorded in Micah 5:2. He also said that the flight into Egypt fulfilled "that which was spoken by the prophet." That verse also can be found, it is in Hosea 11:1. But no verse in the Old Testament says "He shall be called a Nazarene." Since Matthew knew that, then his words ***"which was spoken by the prophets,"*** indicate that there is no one prophet that makes the statement but when you put together the bits and pieces of the verses in the Old Testament about Nazareth and Nazarenes then the combination of those pieces make it plain that Jesus was to be called a "Nazarene." Predicted, not by a prophet but by a compilation of "the prophets."

Of particular interest is Isaiah's use of the Hebrew word "nazer" נָצַר or "branch" and of "nazereth" נְצֻרֶת which is obviously identical with "Nazareth" in form. Isaiah uses other related forms of the same word which have meaning when seeing them in their connection to Nazarene fulfillment of "that which was spoken by the prophets." The same passages when translated in different ways are mediocre in meaning but come alive when seen as mystical conveyances of eternal truth. We will notice them more fully later but first let us see how the passage in Matthew

2:23 fulfills ***"that which was spoken by the prophets."***

"His name is the Branch."

The prophecies in Zechariah of the one whose name is "the Branch," use Joshua, the High Priest, as a symbol of the one to come. The symbol of the Branch does not refer to Joshua himself. It is again important to have an acquaintance with other "Branch" prophecies in the Old Testament if we are to understand these in Zechariah.

There are two Hebrew words translated "Branch" in the branch prophecies. The two Hebrew words for Branch are obviously interchanged. One is "tsemach" צֶמַח (transliterated zemach) used in all the verses for "branch" except the major messianic link in Isaiah 11:1 (and two others in Isaiah and one in Daniel already noted) where "natser," נָצַר (transliterated Nazer) is found. Jesus is called this latter word literally. The hometown of Jesus is Nazareth (Fem. plural of Nazer is Nazereth). Many religious Jews will not mention Jesus' name. They certainly will not call him Christ (Messiah) since calling him Christ would be an oblique confession of what they do not believe. He is most often referred to by pious Jews as "The Nazarene" (Heb. Notsri, נֹצְרִי, and Christians as the Nazarenes or Notsriym, נֹצְרִיִּים, There is no common corresponding word "Christian" in modern Hebrew usage. Practicing Jewish scholars call Jesus Christ "The Nazarene" and Christians the "Nazarenes." The Nazarene literally means "the one who is the branch!" Consequently his name is "The Branch," literally fulfilling this prophecy and so called by those who believe in him least.

(Zec. 3:8) Hear now, O Joshua the High Priest, you, and your fellows that sit before you: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch (Zec. 6:12) And speak to him, saying, Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of the LORD.

"He shall build the Temple of the LORD." The Branch refers to the Messiah. The Temple is the kingdom of the Messiah. It is clear that Gentiles have trusted in the LORD since the time of the Nazarene (Branch) through the building of the church done by Jesus the Nazarene who as we have shown is literally "the Branch."

These two references to the Branch must speak of the same person. It is obvious that Joshua who is being addressed cannot be the branch which he is told will come in the future. Joshua, who bears the same human name (Joshua is the Hebrew form of the Greek Jesus), is a symbol and type of the "Branch" because he had a leading part in building the second Temple which was under construction when this message was given to him. The Messiah is spoken of here as in other Branch prophecies, all of which follow:

(Isa. 4:2) In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. (Isa. 11:1) And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; (Isa. 11:2) And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom

and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; (Isa. 11:10) And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. (Jer. 23:5) Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. (Jer. 23:6) In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 33:15) In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up to David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. (Jer. 33:16) In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith he shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

According to these verses, the man, "the Branch," to come shall be of the house of David, he will be a judge, he will be a king, he will be a priest, he will be the Lord Our Righteousness, he will save Israel and Judah, he will build the Temple of God, in him will the Gentiles trust. Attention given to the context of these Branch prophecies will show that the Branch is the same person who will fulfill the David prophecies. They clearly refer to the Messiah and Jesus of Nazareth has astonishingly paralleled these predictions, so wonderfully fulfilled, yet unwittingly completed by those who reject him. Attention given to the context of these Branch prophecies will show that the Branch clearly refers to the Messiah, and Jesus has astonishingly paralleled these predictions, especially the last, that is, **"in him will the Gentiles trust."**

See Zec. 3:8; 6:12 above and other branch prophecies. Two words ("tsemach" צמח and "natser" נצר) are used in these prophecies. The second word is related to Nazareth and Nazarene as in Isa. 11:1 and other places referring to the Messiah: those are Isa. 1:8; 14:19; 26:3; 27:3; especially messianic are 42:6; 48:6; 49:6; 49:8; and also see 60:21; 65:4. The Holy Spirit called the name of Nazareth in Isa. 48:6. It is these passages with those in Zechariah that Matthew had in mind when he said in Matthew 2:23 "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a "Nazarene."

Below are all the verses where the word is used by Isaiah. One or two are not as obviously connected with the messianic event but the connection is there. In some cases the connection is so startling that no other possible solution seems to present itself. What else is extraordinary is that of all the multiple uses of this word in the scriptures where it has its most common meaning of preserving or keeping, there is no possibility of "double meaning." In Isaiah the use of double meaning is unavoidable in contexts that refer to the Messiah. This is also true as well for two occurrences in Jeremiah. All these are noted below.

Isaiah's Use of the Word "Nazer."

.1. Isaiah 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a "besieged" city.

וְנִוְרְתָהּ בְּתִצִּיּוֹן כְּסֹכֶה בְּכַרְמֵם כְּמִלְיָנָה בְּמִקְשָׁה כְּעִיר וְצִוְרָהּ.

8. Ve-nothrah Bath Tsion ke-sukkah be-carem ke-melunah bi-miqshah ke-'iy
netsurah.

The word "natser" from which the words Nazareth and Nazarene are derived is here translated "besieged." This is the first of many passages in Isaiah where Nazarene prophecies are found in a play on words. This is a prediction of the true Zion being rejected by its inhabitants as a house of lesser importance, like a small watch tower or garden shed, not the main house or like a Nazarene or Christian city, not really Jewish. This verse speaks of the Jewish neglect of the true Zion while they pursue false riches and earthly goals. The palaces of Zion are treated like they were garden sheds or a Nazarene city. The concept of a besieged city conveys little of the thought in the comparison. Isaiah is very precise in his use of comparisons and would not be guilty of this mixed comparison of Zion being treated with disdain and avoided by its inhabitants as though it was a building beneath contempt like a small gardener's house or a shed. Avoidance of a garden shed or a small cottage is an act of discrimination requiring the one discriminating to make a choice. No choice is made in avoiding a besieged city but it is avoided out of necessity not from prejudice. You could, if you chose to, enter a gardeners shed. You could not enter a besieged city even if you chose to. The Jews rejected Zion as though it were "beneath them" Thus the translation "a besieged city" is not as likely a comparison as the mystical meaning of "Netsurah" נְצֻרָה as a "Nazarene" city or as the passive participle is more literally translated, "a Nazarized" city; which by Jews might be avoided out of contempt.. [Return to Commentary](#)

2. Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt "keep" him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

יִצֵר סְמוּךְ תִּצְרֶה שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם כִּי בָךְ בְּטוּחִים

3. yatser samuk **ti[n]tsor** shalom shalom kiy be-ka batuach

This is more properly translated: "You will preserve the man of steadfast purpose in perfect peace, because he trusts in you." The Nazarene connection is less obvious here But the one who is the Nazarene is the bringer of perfect peace that he is kept in by the Father. Or more to the point, God will "nazarize" (make like Jesus) him whose mind is steadfast in purpose.

3. Isaiah 27:3 I the LORD do "keep" it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will "keep" it night and day.

אֲנִי יְהוָה נֹצְרָה לְרִגְעִים אֲשַׁקֵּהּ פֶּן יִפְקֹד
עָלֶיהָ לַיְלָה יוֹם אֲצַרְנָהּ

3. 'ani YHWH **notserah** le-rega'iyim 'ashqen-nah phen yiphqod 'aleyha laylah va-yom **'a[n]ts-tsren-nah**

God's protection of Zion is spoken of here but in a Nazer context. The text could easily translate. "I will make Zion Nazarene."

4. Isaiah 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will "keep" thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

אָנִי יְהוָה קְרֵאתִיךָ בְּצַדֵּק וְאֶתִּיךָ בְּיָדֶיךָ וְאֶצְרֶךָ וְאֶתֶּנֶּךָ
לְבָרִית עִם לְאוּרֵי גוֹיִם:

6. 'ani YHWH qar'atiyka be-tsedeq ve'achezeq be-yareka ve-'e[n]tsreka
ve-'at-teneka le-beriyth 'am le-'or goyim

The use of the phrase "I will keep you" in Hebrew can be "I will make you a Nazar" or Nazarene. This is in the context of the coming Messiah being also a covenant and a light to the Gentiles. Tell me dear reader, What Jew connected with the word Nazar has had any influence greater than Jesus of Nazareth on the Gentiles?

5. Isaiah 48:6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even "hidden things," and thou didst not know them.

שָׁמַעְתָּ תוֹנָה כְּלָה רְאִיתָם הֲלֹא תְגִידוּ הַשְּׁמַעְתִּיךָ
תְּרַשְׁרוּ מִעַתָּה וְנִצְרֹתְךָ לֹא יִדְעֶתֶם:

6. shama'ta chazeh kulah ve-atem ha-lo' tagiydu. hishma'atiyka chadashoth
u-**netsaroth** ve-lo' yeda'tam.

Nazareth is literally named in this extraordinary passage. "Nazuroth נִצְרוֹת is translated "hidden things" in the KJV. The context has God telling us that he will tell things that they do not suspect but that after they happen you will know that he is able to show the future. He says "I have shown you new things even Nazareth." What an incredible verse that had to be in the mind of Matthew when he penned the words in Matt. 2:23.

6. Isaiah 49:6 And he said, Is it a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the "preserved of Israel:" I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be "my salvation" unto the end of the earth.

וַיֹּאמֶר וְקַל מִהַיֹּתֶךָ לִי עֲבֹד לְהַקִּים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשִּׁיב וּנְתַתִּיךָ
לְאוּרֵי גוֹיִם לְהִירֹת יִשְׁעֵתִי עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ:

6. vayo'amer naqal mihayothka liy 'eved le-haqiyim 'eth shivtey Ya'aqov
u-**netsurey** yisrael, ve-nethatiyka le'or goyim le-hayoth **yeshu'a-tiy** 'ad qetsah
ha-'arets

This remarkable passage is obviously messianic. Especially since the one spoken of is to be the "light of the Gentiles" and salvation is to the ends of the earth. What is not obvious is the Hebrew use of words in this verse. The return of the "preserved" of Israel is another of Isaiah's use of the Nazarene words in messianic contexts of which this is one. Preserved of Israel is notsrey yisrael. This would be rendered "Nazarenes of Israel" or as the more common modern Jewish usage, "Christians of Israel."

The Hebrew here literally says : "I give you as a light to the Gentiles to be my yeshua' to the end of the earth." The Hebrew form is the name of Jesus or Yeshua. The coincidence is startling when this verse is read in Hebrew. "Is your being my servant to establish the tribes of Jacob and restore the Israeli Nazarenes a light thing, when I have also given you as a light of the Gentiles to be my Jesus to the ends of the earth." Make what you will of this verse but that is what it says.

7. Isaiah 49:8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of "salvation" have I helped thee: and "I will preserve thee," and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּעֵת רְצוֹן עֲנִיתִיךָ וּבְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָה עֲזָרְתִיךָ
וְאָצְרְךָ וְאַתְּנֶנְךָ לְבְרִית עִם לְהַקִּים אֶרֶץ לְהַנְחִיל
נְחֻלֹת שְׁמָמוֹת:

8. koh 'amar YHWH be'eth ratson 'aniytiyka u-beyom **yeshu'ah** 'azarityka ve-'**e[n]tsarka** ve-'ettaneka leberiyth 'am, le-haqiyim 'erets le-hanechiyl nachaloth shomamoth.

This continues the use of the word Nazar (נָצַר) which was just introduced in verse 6. The passage in the same context as the preceding one is so obviously Messianic. The repeated use of the word "Nazer or Notser" נָצַר (which Matthew 2:23 says is spoken by the prophets in reference to Jesus growing up in Nazareth) is further extension of Isaiah's use of "play" on this word to reveal prophetic truth. It is extraordinary to say the least. If one were to write in English, "In the day of Jesus I've helped you and I will make you a Nazarene and I will give you for a covenant of the people," and then translate that English sentence into Modern Hebrew it would read exactly as this much of the text does here in verse 8.

Isaiah 65:4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּקִבְרִים וּבְנִצְוָרִים יִלְיִנוּ הָאֲכָלִים בְּשׂוֹר
הַתְּזוּר וּמִרְקַק פְּגָלִים קְלִיָּהֶם:

ha-yoshviyim ba-qevariym u-ban-**netsuriym** yaliynnu ha-'okliym basar ha-chaziyr pigulyim keleyhem,

Notice that the construction is the same and could therefore be: "who dwell among the graves and lodge among the Nazarenes." From the Jewish stand point they are among the most despicable.

.Jeremiah 4:16 Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publishers against Jerusalem, that "watchers" come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.

הַזְכִּירוּ לְגוֹיִם הִנֵּה הַשְּׂמִיעוּ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְנִצְרִים
בְּאֵיִם מֵאַרְץ הַמִּרְחָק נִתְּנוּ עַל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה קוֹלָם:

16. hazikiyru la-goyim hineh hashmiy'u 'al yerushalam, **notsriym** b'aiym me'erets ha-mer-chaq va-yittenu 'al 'arey yehudah qolam.

This construction is precisely what a modern Hebrew writer would use to say "Christians are coming from a far country." Notsriym ba'iym me'erets ha-mer-chaq "נִצְרִים בְּאֵיִם מֵאַרְץ הַמִּרְחָק" If this construction were in an Israeli newspaper it would be read as "Christians are coming from a far country." The phrase ('al yerushalam) עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם is translated "against Jerusalem." This construction does not necessarily imply an attack. It could just as easily be translated in or upon Jerusalem and the latter phrase in the verse would be "in the cities of Judah." In

that case the verse would read "Remind the nations, behold, cause it to be heard in Jerusalem, Nazarenes (Christians) are coming from a far land and they will give their voices upon the cities of Judah."

10. Jeremiah 31:6 For there shall be a day, that the "watchmen" upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

כי ישׁוּם קראוּ נֹצְרִים בְּהַר אֶפְרַיִם קוֹמוּ
וְנַעֲלֵה צִיּוֹן אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

6. kiy yesh yom, qare'u **notsriym** be-har 'ephrayim, qumu ve-na'alah tsiyon 'el YHWH 'eloheyenu.

The context of this chapter is one of the return of Israel who at the time of the writing were "the Lost Ten Tribes." The prophecy promises a visit of messengers in a messianic context to Samaria. Verse 31 of the same chapter predicts the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem and thus places the chapter after the birth of Jesus. Mount Ephraim is the region of Samaria where most of the population lived. The context of the passage contains many events that will be associated with "the day" or period leading up to the Nazarenes calling out a message in mount Ephraim. These prophecies would include the return of all the tribes to the land after the Babylonian captivity, the silent years of the growth of the second commonwealth at the end of which the Messiah would come and according to verses 31 to 34 of this chapter he will make a new covenant with his people. This is quoted by the writer of Hebrews as meaning the Christian covenant when Sinai gave place to Golgotha. In that period the verse we are looking at says that Nazarenes would invite Samaritans to Zion. The verse should be translated "There will be a day when Christians will cry in Mount Ephraim, Get up, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God." See Acts 1:8 where Jesus set the stage for the fulfillment of this verse.

The Same Word "N TS R" is Translated Branch in Four Places in Isaiah.

11. Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a "Branch" shall grow out of his roots:

וַיֵּצֵא הַטֵּר מִגִּזְעַי יֵשׁוּעַ וְנֹצֵר מִשָּׂרָשָׁיו יִפְרַח:

1. ve-yatsa' choter migeza' yisay **ve-natsar** mish-sharashayv yiphrach.

This is a key messianic verse which show that the Tsemach Branch prophecies and the Nazer Branch prophecies are linked and are one and the same because they are both "David" prophecies. Both forms of Branch prophecies teach that He is the son of David. Here the coming Nazarene is to be of the family of Jesse who was the father of David. This verse makes it plain that the word Nazer is to be linked to the Branch prophecies and that other occasions of its use should be investigated. Just as every use of the word "branch" translated from Tsmach" in the Bible is not in a messianic context and is therefore not a revelation about the coming of the Messiah so also the use of Nazer will only have such mystical connection in contexts that are clearly messianic. In some of them, like this one, the connection is perfectly clear. Jesus whose name is the "Branch" is just so

because Nazarene means "The Branch."

12. Isaiah 14:19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable "branch," and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet.

ראתה השליכת מקברך כנצר נתעב לביש הרגים
מטעני תרב יורדי אל אבני-בור כפגור מובס:

19. ve-atah hashlakta miq-qibreka ke-**natsar** nith'av le-bush ha-rugiym
miso'amey cherev yordey 'el 'avney-bor ke-peger muvas.

Isaiah's use of comparisons in poetic vision is extensive and descriptive, usually very much to the point. This comparison reveals little however in its literalness. Babylon, who has enjoyed the position of primacy and wealth among the nations, is to suffer rejection and be cast off like a corrupted dead body or clothes that are ripped and bloody. These comparisons are to the point . But how much does "a branch" fit this category? It is open to much speculation and the connection is not immediate as are the other "to the point" comparisons.. However take the mystic meaning of "nazar" נצר (branch) or the "Nazarene." Babylon is to be treated like the Jews treat the "Notser" or "Notsriy" or Nazarene, נצר--complete and ultimate rejection. This word clearly refers to the Messiah in Isa. 11:1.

13. Isaiah 60:21 Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the "branch" of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

ועמך כלם צדיקים לעולם יירשו ארץ נצר
מטעי מעשה ידי להתפאר:

21. ve-'ameka kullam tsadiqiyim le-'olam yiyirshu 'arets, **natser** masa'ay
ma'assah yaday le-hithpa'er'

Chapter 60 ought to begin in 59:20 above which says, **And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the LORD.** This makes it clear that what follows is a description of the coming messianic Zion. This is supported by the mention of the Gentiles bringing their strength to the renewed Zion in verses 3, 5, 11, and 16. The Gentile motif is continued in the next chapter (61) which gives greater description of the Messiah's mission.

It is in this context that Isaiah 60:21 is found. **"Thy people"** refers to the inhabitants of the new Zion under the Messiah. The prophet says they will be Nazarene of God's planting and that this will produce a great marvelling at God. Le-hith-pa'aer להתפאר which is translated "that I may be glorified" is a hithpiel infinitive. It is plurative and reciprocal or passive and it means "for the purpose of producing a marvelling of me."

Indeed these verses that contain the word Nazer are pregnant with meaning and it can not be mere coincidence that the word is in so many messianic contexts. Since it is well known tradition that Matthew wrote originally in Hebrew which was later translated into Greek, then it reasonably follows that his knowledge of the

Hebrew text would prompt him to be the only Gospel writer to call attention to the fact that: ***he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.***

* Rawlinson, G.; Commentary on Isaiah in Pulpit Commentary; Erdmans, pg xiv.

