

era from the parousia of the king. A new section of time emerged with the coming of the king.

WHEN OUR KING COMES HE BRINGS WITH HIM HIS JUSTICE, HIS BENEFICENCE, HIS GLORY.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. II Cor. 4:16-18

D. FOES WILL FALL, CHAPTER 34

1. SLAUGHTER

TEXT: 34:1-7

- 1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye peoples: let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof; the world, and all things that come forth from it.
- 2 For Jehovah hath indignation against all the nations, and wrath against all their host: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.
- 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and the stench of their dead bodies shall come up; and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
- 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig-tree.
- 5 For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

- 6 The sword of Jehovah is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for Jehovah hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
- 7 And the wild-oxen shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be drunken with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

QUERIES

- a. Who are the "nations" Jehovah will slaughter?
- b. How are the "heavens to be rolled up"?
- c. When did Jehovah's sword "drink its fill in heaven"?

PARAPHRASE

Come close and listen to me, all you nations of the world. All of creation had better pay attention to what I have to say! For the Lord of Creation is filled with wrath against the whole world because it has schemed to usurp His sovereignty by human governments. Because human empires are in rebellion against God's rule of man, God has marked them for utter destruction. Their destruction will not only be total, it will be humiliating and horrifying. It will be as when a city is conquered and its slain are cast out into the streets and left unburied and the stench of rotting flesh permeates everything. The destruction of the world empires will be so complete it could furnish enough blood to wash away the mountains. When God finishes His destruction of all that oppose Him, even the material world will be dissolved. The planets of the heavens will be dissolved, the skies will be taken away just like the scroll is rolled up and put away, and the stars will go out of existence like leaves dying and dropping from a fig-tree. My sword of wrath in heaven is filled to staggering. It is going to stagger forth upon Edom, one of those kingdoms opposing My

sovereignty, as an example of the inevitable judgment that is to come upon all kingdoms opposing Me. This sword of the Lord is about to be saturated with blood and gorged with flesh like the sword used to slay lambs and goats. It is Edom that will come under Jehovah's bloody, sacrificial sword. The small and the great, weak and powerful, rich and poor alike are going to be slaughtered in Edom. The land will stagger and reel with blood like a drunken man reels from wine. Their whole land will be saturated with dead bodies.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 JUDGMENT ENVISIONED: Once again Isaiah is bringing a section of his written prophecy to a climactic conclusion. He has done so before in chapters 6, 12, and 23. These two chapters (34 and 35) are the climactic conclusion to the section warning Judah not to seek help from Egypt (28-35). Chapters 34 and 35 summarize the reasons Judah should not seek help from pagan, worldly, God-opposing governments: (1) because God has decreed their doom; (2) because God has a glorious future planned for Zion.

What God is going to do will involve the whole cosmos (creation) so (v. 1-2) He calls, through the prophet, the whole creation to attention. What God is going to do involves not only the earth but heaven. He is going to defeat all the "principalities, powers, world rulers of this present darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places . . . and disarm them, and make a public example of them, triumphing over them in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). God is not going to "utterly slaughter" all the power that opposes Him in Isaiah's day. Furthermore, the *total physical* destruction of the world is probably not even intended here. The defeat of the spiritual power that opposes God and enslaves men is much more imperative and cosmically significant than the physical destruction. In other words, the victory Christ accomplished over the world, the flesh and the devil, on the cross and at the

resurrection was the great slaughter probably referred to here. Of course, God destroyed His enemies, the great world empires that were possessed by the devil to attempt to thwart God's redemptive program in the earth. He destroyed them one by one. And, God will ultimately destroy all physical kingdoms with the destruction of the universe, and He will create a new heaven and a new earth (II Pet. 3:8-13). But all that would be of little consequence without the once-and-for-all defeat of Satan and his hosts at the cross. It was at the cross (and the empty tomb) that God "brought to nothing things that are," destroyed the wisdom of the wise, (I Cor. 1:18-31), cast out the ruler of this world and destroyed his power (Jn. 12:31; 16:11; Heb. 2:14-15; I Jn. 3:8). Now this work, culminated in the cross and resurrection, began as God took the people of Isaiah's day and destroyed their pagan enemies, one by one, and delivered a faithful remnant through which God brought the Messiah into the world in order to "deliver them from their enemies" (cf. Luke 1:67-79). Isaiah is predicting the same great overthrow of the world-opposition as Joel predicts (Joel 2:28—3:21; see our comments, *Minor Prophets*, College Press). It is the same overthrow of world-opposition Isaiah predicted earlier (Isa. 13—23; see our comments, *Isaiah, Vol I*, College Press). It is the same overthrow of world-opposition Ezekiel predicts (Ezek. 38—39) and Daniel predicts (Dan. 2—11) and Zechariah predicts (Zech. 9—14). It was accomplished in the cross and resurrection when Christ "took captivity captive" and will be consummated at His second coming.

The Jewish prophets portrayed the end of the Jewish dispensation and the beginning of the new era (the Messianic age) as a Day of Jehovah, a great judgment and redemption. The Messianic age was portrayed in eschatological, cataclysmic, cosmic figures of speech. It is even referred to in the New Testament in somewhat the same way: (Just to list a few)

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| 1. Joel 2:28—3:21 | 5. Luke 4:16-29 |
| 2. Malachi 3:1-5 | 6. Matthew 23:37—24:35 |
| 3. Ezekiel 38:1—39:29 | 7. Colossians 2:14-15 |
| 4. Daniel 9:24-27 | 8. Hebrews 12:18-29 |

Much modern-day interpretation of O.T. prophecy alleges the main function of the prophets was to predict the so-called "rapture, tribulation, millennium," and the Second Coming of Christ. It seems totally incongruous to us that the prophets would devote as much detail as is alleged to the end of the so-called "church age." Their main *predictive* function, as the New Testament *plainly* points out, was to proclaim the *First advent* of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, the church (cf. I Pet. 1:10-12; II Pet. 1:12-21; Luke 24:25-27; 24:44-49, etc.).

If modern readers of the Bible could project themselves back into the days of the prophets or the apostles, or if they could assimilate the Jewishness of those Jews, they might easily understand how eschatological, cataclysmic and cosmic it would seem to talk of the abrogation and abolition of a religious system (Judaism) with 1400 years of heritage. It was their whole existence, politically, socially, religiously. To predict a New Era which would completely replace the Old would seem like a prediction of the end of the world-order. And the prophets were called upon to portray the New Era in just those figures.

Of course, there is always the typical element in every Day of the Lord, which points to God's ultimate Day, the literal, actual consummation of judgment and redemption. And that is probably the case with our text here in Isaiah. Even God's awful judgment of sin in the crucifixion of Christ and God's glorious act of redemption in Christ's resurrection is, in addition to being His literal, historical work of salvation, a prophecy, promise and type of the final, consummating work at Christ's Second Coming.

V. 5-7 JUDGMENT EXEMPLIFIED: Edom is now cited as a representative of the God-opposing human governments. Edom was one of the first human governments to oppose God's redemptive work in placing His covenant people in the land of Canaan. The covenant people were later opposed by Ammon, Moab, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. All these, and others, were, in their own times, condemned

by the prophets and judged by God. Even the sinful covenant peoples (Israel and Judah) were condemned and judged because they chose carnal, human systems of government rather than government by the rule of God's word. Probably the most graphic symbolism of God's defeat of the attempt by human government to overthrow the rule of God in men's hearts (the establishment of God's kingdom among men) is the symbolism in the book of Daniel—in the great image (ch. 2) and the four beasts (ch. 7).

The sword of the Lord in heaven is filled with blood. In other words, the wrath of God has been accumulating (cf. Rev. 15:7), and it is symbolized by a sword poised to vent its full fury on God's enemy. God is longsuffering but He will not be opposed forever. The judgment of God is portrayed as a great sacrifice. This is a figure used elsewhere in the Old Testament (Zeph. 1:7-18; Jer. 46:10; 50:27). Sacrifice was worship of the Lord. Slaughtering of animals was never very pretty to behold. In fact, it is always rather revolting. But in spite of the revolting and almost sickening splashing of blood and burning of flesh, God was glorified. The punishing of sin in the innocent and perfect Jesus is an idea both revolting and repulsive to the human ego—nevertheless God is exalted in it. So, God will be glorified in the slaughter that is necessitated at the judgment of human, God-opposing governments. Edward J. Young considers the "lambs and goats" of v. 6 to be figurative of the general citizenry of Edom and the "wild-oxen and bulls" of v. 7 to symbolize the leaders of the nation. Whatever the case the point being made is the awfulness and completeness of judgment upon those who have so persistently opposed God's redemptive work in the world by opposing His people. This should be a graphic warning to all governments in any age opposing God's people in any way.

QUIZ

1. Why do chapters 34 and 35 seem to form a climax in Isaiah's book?

2. Cite N.T. passages to show that God defeated His opposition at the cross.
3. Why do we think Isaiah is predicting the cross and empty tomb accomplishment?
4. What other O.T. prophets predicted God's defeat of His opposition at the cross and establishment of the church?
5. Why would the Jewish prophets speak of God's victory as if it were the end of the present world-order?
6. What N.T. passages confirm this?
7. Why is it most probable that the O.T. prophets spoke mainly of Christ's first coming?
8. What part does Edom play in this drama?

2. SHAMBLES

TEXT: 34:8-17

- 8 For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
- 9 And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
- 10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.
- 11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the raven shall dwell therein: and he will stretch over it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness.
- 12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there; and all its princes shall be nothing.
- 13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation of jackals, a court for ostriches.
- 14 And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves, and the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster

shall settle there, and shall find her a place of rest.

- 15 There shall the dart-snake make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shade; yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate.
- 16 Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read: no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate; for my mouth, it hath commanded, and his Spirit, it hath gathered them.
- 17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

QUERIES

- a. How could the smoke of Edom go up forever?
- b. What is a "night-monster"?
- c. What is the "book of Jehovah"?

PARAPHRASE

Yes, the Lord will bring Zion its day of recompense. Edom has had its day opposing Zion, but the Lord will bring vengeance upon Edom at the proper time. Edom's streams will be fouled with tar and pitch and her soil turned into sulphurous dust and her land into burning, smoldering pools of tar, not fit for habitation. This desolation of Edom will never end. It will be an uninhabited kingdom forever, from one generation to another. It will never again be made a habitable place. The only creatures inhabiting this territory henceforth will be wild, unclean creatures of loneliness and desolation—pelicans, porcupines, owls and ravens. God has measured that kingdom by His standards of righteousness and justice, and it is found to be fit only for destruction and desolation. They shall call it, No Kingdom There, and its princes shall soon all be gone. Thorn bushes and weeds will grow up inside its palaces and

mansions; its fortresses will fall into complete disuse and be the haunts of wild jackals and ostriches. The animals of the desert will forage there along with wolves and wild goats. The screeching night-thing will settle there and build her nest. The dangerous darting snake and the scavenging vulture will settle there and reproduce their young. Search what the Lord has caused to be written in His book; not one of these predictions shall go unfulfilled because the Lord who revealed the predictions through my mouth is the same Lord whose Spirit will cause the wild animals to inhabit the desolation of Edom. The Lord of Creation has set this territory aside and marked it off to be given to those doleful and despised wild creatures from one generation to another.

COMMENTS

v. 8-10 WASTE-LAND: The vengeance of the Lord serves also as a recompense for Zion. Edom has vented its age-old hatred (which began with the family feud between Esau and Jacob) upon Zion with an unrelenting passion (cf. Obadiah). Edom "stood aloof," "rejoiced," and "joined in" when other pagans plundered Jerusalem. God's sovereignty and His sovereign program cannot go on being thwarted forever. If His sovereignty is to be verified, rebellion must be punished. Edom's time has come, or is very near. When it happens, Zion's cause will be vindicated.

Malachi 1:3, 300 years after Isaiah, says the mountains and the heritage of Esau (Edom) were laid waste and left to the jackals of the desert. Then Malachi 1:4-5 represents the Edomites vowing they will rebuild and the Lord vowing He will tear down again. The territory of Edom was made desolate by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks (Seleucids) in succession. However, there was a brief period of recovery in the time of the Maccabees, and Edom once again appears as an adversary of Israel of some importance. Gradually, however, Edom had to yield to the superior power of the

Romans and was later overrun and conquered by the Moham-
 medan Arabs who completed the ruin of the land. It is now,
 and has been for more than a thousand years, one of the most
 desolate territories of land upon the face of the earth. Isaiah
 would hardly seem to demand a literal turning streams into
 pitch. The present land of once ancient Edom has no perennial
 rivers. It has numerous "wadis" (dry stream beds) which some-
 times run with torrents when the winter rains flood them.
 Isaiah's intent, no doubt, is that Edom should be visited with
 a destruction and desolation so complete it could be likened
 unto that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24; Jer. 49:18).
 Men have passed through this area again and again since those
 days and still do, though they all testify to its utter desolate-
 ness. The word "forever" must be understood as hyperbole here.

V. 11-15 WILD-LIFE: There is some disagreement among
 translators as to the exact identification of the animals in these
 verses. The only one generally agreed upon is the raven. The
kooth is translated, cormorant, pelican or hawk. The *kipod*
 is translated, bittern, hedgehog or porcupine. Whatever their
 specific genre, the intent of the prophet seems to be to describe
 only animals that inhabit desolate, deserted places not in-
 habited by human beings. These forlorn beasts of the desert
 nights will move in and make this territory their possession.
 No other creatures will want it. God has measured off this
 territory for this specific group of unclean animals. The
 measuring-tape and the plumb-line are *tohu* and *vohu* and
 are the same two words used in Genesis 1:2 and translated
 waste and void, or confusion and emptiness. In other words
 God has marked Edom for systematic or planned reduction
 to chaos. All the nobles (rulers by birth) of Edom will disappear,
 and none will remain to constitute a kingdom. So the territory
 will be called, No Kingdom There. Its palaces and cities will
 be deserted and overgrown with brush and thorns. In verse 14
 the word in Hebrew *lyilyith* is translated *night-monster* in the
 ASV and *satyr* in the RSV. Some say it is a word with Akkadian
 root meaning some kind of "storm-spirit." Most Hebrew lexi-
 cons define it as "screech-owl." *Lilit* was the name of a female

demon or wicked fairy, in whom the Assyrians (Akkadians) believed—a being thought to vex and persecute her victims in their sleep. The Hebrew word for *night* is *layeloh*. Whatever the case, the night-monster or screech-owl is added to the arrow-snake and vulture to indicate a place where dwells every odious, despised, scary creature known. The prophets were poets and used imagery. When so doing they were free to use even the beliefs and superstitions of their contemporaries to intensify the force of their messages.

V. 16-17 WORD OF THE LORD: Some have said the “book of Jehovah” was a volume collected of the works of Moses, some of the prophets before Isaiah, and the psalms of David. But there is no evidence of such a collection then. It is better to understand the book to be that of Isaiah’s own writings up to that point. Nothing contained in his writings shall fail of fulfillment is the prophet’s warning, for his writings are the work of Jehovah. Every utterance of his, even in the minute detail of the animals marked to possess Edom’s territory, will come to pass, for although the predictions come through the mouth of Isaiah, it shall be the Spirit of the living God which shall bring them to pass. The Lord allots to all the nations of the earth their boundaries (cf. Jer. 27:5ff). He has now allotted Edom to the unclean beasts and birds which are mentioned. He has marked it desolate (cf. Mt. 23:38). All kingdoms which oppose God are marked for destruction (cf. I Cor. 15:24-28, 50). Edom is here typical and representative.

QUIZ

1. How will Edom’s judgment be recompense for Zion?
2. Were Edom’s streams literally turned into pitch?
3. What does the list of these particular animals portray about Edom?
4. What is the territory of ancient Edom like today?
5. How could Isaiah be certain his predictions would be fulfilled?