

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 34

*Theme: The final world clash –
the Battle of Armageddon*

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Chapter 34

Shift of emphasis to nations, not Jerusalem or Israel and not their specific immediate enemies.

Throne is Established on Earth." Judgment has been the theme all the way through this section. We have looked at six woes and followed a progression in this matter of prophecy. We saw a local situation into which Isaiah spoke and then watched him move into that broader area, as he looked down through the centuries to the time of judgment that was coming in the future, which the Lord Jesus called the Great Tribulation. Beyond that we saw the coming of the King. However, in our day we are not looking for the King, we are looking for our Savior. We are "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). After He takes the church out of the world, those who remain will go through the frightful Tribulation period, which will end with the War or the Campaign of Armageddon.

This chapter is in contradiction to the philosophy of the world. You see, man expects to so improve the world by his own efforts that he will build a Utopia. He plans to bring in a millennium, although he may call it something else. Man thinks he is capable of lifting himself by his own bootstraps. The basic philosophy of evolution (and evolution is a philosophy rather than a science) is that there is improvement as we go along. It is onward and upward forever! Or, as the slogan has it, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." Man has woven this philosophy into the fabric of life; he thinks we are moving into something which is great and good.

The Word of God also looks forward to a wonderful future for this earth, but it is not the consummation of man's efforts. Everything that man has built apart from God is coming under a frightful judgment. All of man's work is contrary to God and must come into a final conflict. That conflict is set before us here as the Battle of Armageddon. The sin of man will finally be headed up in the Man of Sin who will attempt to bring in a kingdom for himself, and that kingdom is the Great Tribulation period. It can only be ended with the coming of Christ to the earth to establish His Kingdom.

This chapter looks entirely to the future. The Assyrians have disappeared. F. Delitzsch has made this statement, which I think is quite accurate: "We feel that we are carried away from the stage of history, and are transported into the midst of the last things," and these chapters are the "last steps whereby our prophet rises to the height at which he soars in chapters 40 to the end. After the fall of Assyria, and when darkness began to gather on the horizon again, Isaiah broke away from his own time -- 'the end of all things' became more and more his home.... It was the revelation of the mystery of the incarnation of God, for which all this was to prepare the way."¹

This chapter and the next are one vision.

To properly understand the full import of the chapter it is important to see the context and the order of placement of the chapters. The order of the material in Isaiah is often a revelation in itself. Superficial treatment of the book by commentators who already doubt the unity of the book is behind the conclusions that there is random placement of the chapters. The doubters say

¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

it is because there are a number of writers and editors of the finished book of Isaiah as we have it. However when the purpose of the placement is seen then these chapters not only are in the right place but the placement itself is a kind of revelation.

Actually the chapters seem to be out of place since the chapters 28 to 33 are previews of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem sent by Sennacherib and 36 to 39 are historical narratives that describe the history of the siege and related incidents. Thus the order seems to be broken by the inclusion of what some think is a diatribe against Edom or Idumea as it is called in chapter 34.

Understanding the placement will help in seeing the reason for the placement and what message the chapters were designed to give to the perceptive reader.

The content of the two chapters describe material extending from the present (Isaiah's present) to the final completion of God's dealing with the Remnant Nation (Zion). The preceding chapter (33) completes the series of visions (found in 28 - 33) on the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Assyrian armies. These (34 - 35) two chapters are visions which see all of Zion's enemies destroyed (chap 34) and the future introduction and exaltation of Zion (chap 35).

There are therefore two great historical "object lessons" which presage and prepare the faithful for the patient wait for the promised future destruction of all the enemies of Zion and the ultimate victory of Zion. The first object lesson is the complete destruction of the Assyrian armies and salvation of Jerusalem followed by her prosperity in Isaiah's generation. This was predicted before the fact in great detail in chapters 28 - 33. The four historical chapters (36 to 39) which follow these two are included to confirm that all that was predicted was completely fulfilled; and therefore what stretches far out into the future (what is contained in 34 and 35) will be fulfilled as well.

The second object lesson for the faithful dweller in Zion (the demise of Idumea) is at once both a future and a past confirmation of the truth of the promises of God. That is that Zion's enemies will ultimately all be destroyed as well as the ultimate victory of Zion.

Chapter 34 promises the defeat of Zion's enemies--all of them--right up to the end of the world. But to illustrate and confirm the sureness of this victory of Zion over all enemies being fulfilled Edom is presented as the historical object lesson. This lesson of God's dealing with Edom is for the future and will demonstrate how all the enemies of Zion will suffer extinction forever. Thus chapter 34 is primarily a prophecy of the fall of Idumea but as all the enemies of Zion are ment for extinction Idumea is depicted here to confirm the truth that all God's enemies will eventually fall.

To those who believed (trusted in Zion) from Isaiah's writing, for over 700 years Edom still existed as a formidable kingdom. Six hundren years from this writing Edom with its capitol at Petra was still able to frustrate the expansion of an expanding Rome. When Pompey in about 60 BCE was consolodating the whole of the East under the Roman government Edom was able to resist and remain independent. At the same time The Jewish nation was brought under Roman government control. See the resistance of Petra Josephus Wars 8:1

Those who trusted in Zion's coming knew that as long as Edom remained a strong nation Zion would not appear. But with the disappearance of Edom Actually Edom was "phased out" during the same historical period that the church of Christ was being phased in. Its decline historically actually mirrors the growth of the Christian Church. So that by the time the period that historians call "The Triumph of Christianity" had arrived Edom ended its long decline and had become the "habitation of wild animals" and has so remained to this day. As for confirmation we have had almost 2000 years of observing a place on the planet that formerly was

inhabited and supported one of the ancient world's foremost kingdoms in wealth and wisdom but which has remained uninhabited for almost two millennia.

It isn't necessary to describe the current continuing condition of the former Edomite kingdom or its capitol. Anyone who has visited Petra and marvelled at its former glories will agree that in this chapter Isaiah described perfectly the condition and situation it has gone through from age to age, from generation to generation, it has been the habitation of wild animals only. No one has lived there and no one goes there for social or economic intercourse common to cities except a steady stream of tourists (mostly Christian pilgrims) among whom the knowing ones are awed by the coincidence of Isaiah 34 and Edom's continual example of what God will do to the enemies of Zion. For other prophets' prophecies of Edom see the Commentary introduction to Ezekiel chapter 35.²

Yahweh's day of judgment

This poem depicts the effects of Yahweh's wrath on the self-exalting nations. His judgment will be universal (vv. 1-4). Isaiah particularized it with reference to Edom, a representative nation (vv. 5-17; cf. 25:10-12).

Here we have depicted the scene of carnage that will ensue upon the Battle of Armageddon.

This chapter is remarkable for its combination of the general and the particular, the universal and the local. It reminds us of the Greek word *hekastos* ('each one individually') used in so many descriptions of judgment in the NT.

There are many passages in Jeremiah (viz. ch. xxv. 31, 33, 34, xlvi. 10, l. 27, 39, li. 40) which cannot be explained in any other way than on the supposition that Jeremiah had the prophecy of Isaiah in ch. xxxiv. Before him.³

Judgment against the nations and against the Edomites in particular. A disturbing ch, full of bitterness and anger, this text portrays the Lord as wreaking vengeance against the nations, apparently because they opposed Zion. It focuses in particular on Edom, a nation located southeast of Judah between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba or Eilat. Relations between Edom and Judah during the preexilic period were often hostile (e.g. 2 Sam. 8.13-14). This hostility had deep roots: According to Genesis, the Edomites were descended from Esau, Jacob's brother and rival (see Gen. 25.20-34; 27.1-28.9; 33.1-20; Mal. 1.1-5). The Edomites were especially antagonistic towards the Judeans when the Babylonians conquered Judah at the end of the 6th century BCE, and Judean anger towards the Edomites was severe (see Ps. 137.7; Ezek. 25.12; 35.5-10; Obad. vv. 10-16). This ch predicts an utter disaster overcoming the Edomites in the strongest possible terms. This is ironic in light of later Jewish history, since the Edomites converted to Judaism en masse during the late 2nd century BCE, and were among the most zealous Jews during the conflict with Rome in the 1st century CE. Rabbinic literature understands Edom in prophetic texts as a symbolic reference to the Roman empire and Christianity, rather than to the historical Edomites, who were in fact Jewish by the time rabbinic literature was composed. See, for example, Targum to v. 9.⁴

² <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴ Jewish Study Bible

¹Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

In Isaiah 1:2 God called heaven and earth to witness His judgment upon His people Israel. In this chapter God calls only the nations of the earth to witness His final judgment upon the nations.⁵

1-4: All (enemy) nations: These verses include all the current and future enemies of Zion from 700 BC to the end of the world. They will all disappear like Edom and suffer eternal extinction like Edom did over 700 years after the prophecy was given. The predictive language of destruction is filled with hyperbole as are most prophetic utterances describing the defeat of God's and Zion's enemies,-- defeats that are overwhelming like Edom's.⁶

²For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

Indignation = wrath of God. Rev 19:19 through Chapter 21; Zech 14.⁷

[all nations, and his fury upon all their armies] The call is to all nations (Isa. 34:1): God's wrath will be felt by all of them when their armies will be destroyed by Him (Joel 3; Zech. 14:1-5; Rev. 16:13-16; 19:11-21).⁸

[utterly destroyed them] All but a sixth part of the vast armies of the nations under Antichrist will be destroyed in one day (Ezek. 39:2; Joel 3; Zech. 14:1-15; Rev. 19:11-21).⁹

Observe carefully the words chosen to depict this judgment: indignation, fury, utterly destroyed, and delivered to the slaughter. They are the strongest possible expressions that could be used. The judgment is universal, and it is severe. It is not only the "...time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), but it is the time of the earth's travail. Our Lord spoke of this as a time of suffering that will be unparalleled in the history of the world. The seals, trumpets, and vials in the Book of Revelation all intensify and confirm this. Whether you believe it or not, the earth is moving toward the judgment of God. Instead of a wonderful day coming for sinful man, a time of judgment is coming. As we look around us at our contemporary civilization, everything we see is going to come under the judgment of our almighty God.¹⁰

The indignation of the LORD: In the immediate context, Isaiah continues the thought of the coming judgment against the Assyrians. But in the larger context, we can see this passage as an announcement of the judgment of come upon the nations during the Great Tribulation.

Jesus, and many Old Testament prophets, plainly told us of a coming time He called great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), when because of the judgment of God, conditions on earth would be

⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

¹⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

the worst human history had ever seen. Revelation chapters 6, 8-9, and 16-18 describe this horrific time, when there will be widespread ecological, economic, cosmic, and human catastrophe on a level never before known in history.

The idea that this chapter relates to the very end times goes back a long way among Christian teachers. "Eusebius, with many other ancients, will have this chapter to be understood of the end of the world and the last judgment." (Trapp)¹¹

No wonder Isaiah pleads with the nations: Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! In light of how terrible the great tribulation will be, when we consider how prophecy has been fulfilled, and how the stage is set for even more fulfilled prophecy, we should hear and take heed!

The stage is set for a rebuilt temple that will come in the last days, necessary to fulfill the prophecies of the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The stage is set for the sort of world-dominating confederation of nations, heir to the Roman Empire to arise (Daniel 2:36-45; Revelation 13:1-8; Rev_17:10-14). The stage is set for a political and economic "superman" to arise, the sort of single political leader who will lead this world-dominating confederation of nations (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 13:4-7). The stage is set for the kind of false religion the Bible says will characterize the very last days (2 Thessalonians 2:4; 2Th_2:9-12; Revelation 13:11-15; Rev_17:1-6). The stage is set for the kind of economic system predicted for the very last days (Revelation 13:15-17). The stage is set for the end-times scenario the Bible says will happen between Russia and Israel in Ezekiel 38-39.

The warning regarding this time of the indignation of the LORD is directed not to God's people, but to the nations. This is because God's people will escape the terrors of the great tribulation, though they may experience great hardship in the time leading up to it. Jesus said we should pray that we would be counted worthy to escape that time of terrors (Luke 21:36), and be taken to heaven in the great catching away of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).¹²

³Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

Cast out: refused burial (Jer 22:19).¹³

[cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses] That is, they will be left unburied, for it will take Israel seven months to bury such a vast multitude (Ezek. 39:11-16).¹⁴

[melted with their blood] See Ezek. 38:17-21; 39:17-21; Rev. 14.

This description is to me the most terrible and repulsive in the Bible. I can't think of anything worse than this. It confirms what the Lord Jesus said when He was here and what the Book of Revelation teaches about a coming judgment upon this earth.

¹¹ <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

¹² <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

¹³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

¹⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

I realize that a great many people doubt this, which reminds me of an incident when a tropical hurricane broke on the Gulf Coast several years ago. I traveled along that area several years later, drove for miles and saw entire sections of cities that the storm had taken out. Even after several years, nothing is there. I also saw places where jungle in the area was absolutely removed. I was told about an apartment house in the area where a group of people were living fast and loose. When they heard the warnings about the storm, they decided that they would not leave. They didn't believe the storm was going to be severe; so they had a big beer bust. Instead of evacuating, they all got drunk. They ridiculed the storm forecast, and they were all killed. You can do the same thing concerning the judgment that is coming on this earth. God says that judgment is coming, and it is coming.¹⁵

⁴And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

Language of Rev 6:13, 14.

(Gerald Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang*, Bantam Books, 1990.

Maimondes discovered in Gen 1:1 that the universe has 10 dimensions, 4 knowable, 6 unknowable! See *Beyond Perception*, khouse.org.)

Mt 24:29; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 19:11-21; Ps 102:26; Heb 1:11.¹⁶

[all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together] This verse refers to the rolling together of the clouds and their moving on as if they had dissolved and passed away, and to the falling of meteors like leaves and figs -- something like that under the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17, notes). Stars or meteors will fall also at the second coming of Christ (Mt. 24:29-31; Rev. 16:17-21).

[dissolved] Hebrew: maqaq (HSN-<H4743>), to melt; flow; vanish; dissolve; pine away.

c [scroll]

Ancient Scrolls

Parchment books were rolled on two sticks or cylinders -- one for each end of the scroll. A scroll containing the Pentateuch (except Leviticus and part of Deuteronomy) in the library at Cambridge, England, is said to be 48 ft. long and 22 in. wide. Originally it must have been 90 ft. long. Consisting of 37 different goat skins dyed red, it contains 117 columns of writing 4 in. wide, each 40-50 lines. The Samaritan Pentateuch, one of the oldest MSS we know of, consists of 21 skins, each having 5-6 columns 13 in. high and 7 1/2 in. wide with 70-72 lines. The entire scroll has 110 columns. Scrolls were generally encased in a protective cover on which the title was written. Such books are often referred to in Scripture as scrolls (Isa. 34:4; Rev. 6:14) or rolls (Isa. 8:1; Ezra 6:1-2; Jer. 36:2-32; Ezek. 2:9; 3:1-3; Zech. 5:1-2).

[host shall fall down] Stars or meteors (Mt. 24:29-31; Mk. 13:25; Rev. 6:12-17).¹⁷

When you see a little leaf fall from a tree, you can attempt to glue it back on the branch, but it won't stay and it won't live. Just as surely, judgment is coming, and you can't keep it from

¹⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

¹⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

coming. There is only one thing you can do: make sure that you have a shelter. Listen to God and remember that the Lord Jesus is the shelter in the time of storm which is coming upon the earth.¹⁸

⁵For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

Edom - traditional enemies of Israel (God). Might be used idiomatic or synecdoche (specific for the general).

Edom:

- Moses - denied passage (Num 20:14-21);
- David subdues them (2 Sam 9:14);
- Revolt under Jeroboam (2 Chr 21:8-10);
- Smote Judah under Ahaz (2 Chr 28:17);
- Ready to shed blood (Ezek 35:5);
- To be cut off (Obad 18).

From Esau, twin of Jacob. Obadiah 3 attributes sin of pride to Edom (Jer 49:16). Cursed in Amos 1:11,12. Rejoiced under Nebuchadnezzar's captivity (Ps 137:7; Obad 10-14; Lam 4:21, 22; Ezek 35:10-13).

Esau to serve Jacob (Gen 25:23, 27:40).

Edom: Possession for Judah (Num 24:18).¹⁹

Idumea

Idumea (Isa. 34:5-6; Ezek. 36:5; Mk. 3:8) or Edom (Gen. 36:43). It lay south of the Dead Sea. Bozrah or Bezer was a chief city in the north and Sela a chief one in the southern part. It seems that Idumea is singled out, like Babylon (Isa. 13:19-22), to partake of God's wrath at the second coming of Christ (Isa. 34:5-8). It may be that part of Edom will betray Israel and cooperate with Antichrist in the tribulation. There would be no other reason for such judgment at this time that we know of, aside from their rejoicing over the calamities that had come to Israel (Ezek. 35:15; 36:5). This will evidently be one of the places where the armies of the Antichrist will be concentrated at the time of Armageddon (Isa. 34:6-8). Sela, south of Bozrah, is where Israel will be protected from Antichrist.²⁰

God bathes that sword in heaven -- that is important to see. When you and I take the sword down here, it is for vengeance or some ulterior motive. When God takes the sword, it is for justice and righteousness upon the earth. His sword is bathed in heaven, and it is going to fall in judgment. Idumea is Edom, and Edom is Esau, and Esau represents the flesh. Esau represents all in Adam who are rebellious against God and His people. God said, "...Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). God will judge Edom because they are against God, against His people, against His Word, against everything that is right and good.²¹

¹⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

²⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

The Edomites shared a common ancestry with Israel. The Israelites were descended from Jacob; the Edomites from Jacob's twin brother, Esau. Edom was always Israel's bitter enemy. The destruction of Edom mentioned here is a picture of the ultimate end of all who oppose God and his people.²²

Indeed it shall come down on Edom: The Edomites were near neighbors to Israel, and often bitter rivals. The Edomites rejoiced whenever the people of Judah or Israel were afflicted, so Isaiah focuses on the judgment that will come against Edom, using them as a single example of the large judgment that will come upon all the nations (as in Isaiah 34:1-2).

“Edom was a sister nation to Israel, but it hated Israel more than any other nation. Throughout all of history we see a burning hatred of Edom against Israel. It is for this reason that Edom is frequently presented as a representative of all the nations that hated the Jews.” (Bultema)

“Edom had derided and attacked Judah for centuries, but now God would avenge this hateful attitude that is so characteristic of the world’s ways.” (Wolf)²³

Idumea: or Edom. Thus Edom is introduced as an object lesson of what will happen to all the enemies of Zion. The hyperbolic description of blood and sword in heaven against Edom illustrates the complete destruction that was destined for that nation. We, today, had almost 2000 years to look back at the incredible fulfillment that has continued to this day. Isaiah's first readers had more than 700 years to look forward before it was fulfilled.²⁴

“The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Bozrah or Petra (Amos 1:11, 12; Jer 49:13).

[sword of the LORD is filled with blood] The sword of the Lord is spoken of as being filled with blood which is figurative of great slaughter. The inhabitants of Idumea, especially Bozrah, are spoken of as being sacrificed like animals of old when God comes with Christ at His second coming to deliver Israel (Isa. 34:6-8).²⁵

The sword of the LORD is filled with blood . . . their land shall be soaked with blood: The indignation of the LORD finds its final fulfillment in the battle of Armageddon, which will be a terribly bloody affair (Revelation 14:20).

Overflowing with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams, for the LORD has a great sacrifice . . . and a great slaughter: In associating this time of judgment with the image of sacrifice, Isaiah tells us that this is payment for the penalty of sin. Even as a sacrificial victim paid for the sin of the one bringing the sacrifice, so the bloody judgment of sin at Armageddon will be a payment for the penalty of sin. It will be an imperfect, incomplete payment, but it will be a payment of some kind.

²² Life Application Study Bible.

²³ <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

²⁴ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

²⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

“The mention of sacrificial animals is primarily intended to refer to the slaughter of people.”
(Wolf)²⁶

Using sacrificial imagery, the Lord will seek what is peculiarly His in judgment. He will take what He alone has a right to take. Sin is a matter of life and death. All sin must be atoned for with sacrificial blood (cf. Lev. 4:1-12; Isa. 53). Those who repudiate the sacrifice of Christ for their sins will forfeit their own lives as sacrifices to God.

A sacrifice is necessary, therefore, third (v. 6b), if the demands of divine holiness are to be met. No rebel would be spared. Bozrah (“impenetrable,” modern Buseirah), the capital of Edom, stood about 25 miles south southeast of the Dead Sea.

“The sacrifice announced here is enormous. Not only lambs, goats, bull calves, and bulls are to be sacrificed, but also wild oxen . . . which are otherwise never mentioned for sacrifice. . . . Wildberger (1343) understands the passage to picture a sacrifice greater than any that has ever been offered.”²⁷

“He who really takes offense at what is here related has no true conception of the heinous character of sinful rebellion against the Holy One of Israel.”²⁸

⁷And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

The King James Version translates wild oxen as unicorns. Bultema writes, “There used to be quite a difference of opinion regarding the word unicorns, but today the general opinion is that it does not mean rhinoceros but aurochs, or wild bison. According to Deuteronomy 33:17, this animal did not have one but two horns.”

“Wild oxen were not used in the sacrifices. Possibly therefore Isaiah is using animal metaphors for the important people and leaders of Edom.” (Motyer)²⁹

⁸For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

[day of the LORD'S vengeance] The day of the Lord beginning with the second coming of Christ (Isa. 63:4).³⁰

This is the day of the Lord's vengeance. We will see this again in Isaiah 63:1-6. You can't do anything to stop it, just like there is nothing you can do to stop Niagara Falls from flowing. God says that things have to be made right upon this earth. To make them right He has to put down the evil and rebellious man upon this earth. Many people will not bow to God; but, since this is God's universe, where will they go? He has only one place for them, which is called hell. You

²⁶ <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

²⁷ Watts, Isaiah 34—66, p. 11. His reference is to H. Wildberger's three-volume German commentary on Isaiah 1—39.

²⁸ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

³⁰ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

may have your own concept of it, but it undoubtedly is lots worse than a place of literal fire. God's Word is inviolable and the Lord Jesus said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). My friend, it is wise to read the weather report and, when a storm is forecast, to make arrangements to escape it.³¹

A fourth reason for this slaughter is that the Lord will take vengeance on those who have trodden down Zion. He will act for His people against those who have cursed them (cf. Gen. 12:3). Even though we do not know when this will happen, God has a timetable for this judgment and will keep to it.³²

⁹And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

Streams of Pitch

Hebrew: nachal (HSN-<H5158>), a winter torrent; a narrow valley; a mine shaft. Just what is referred to is not clear, for the word is used of literal streams, as well as the waters from the rock which Moses smote (Ps. 78:20), and the gushers of water that will spring forth in the desert in the Millennium (Isa. 35:6). If figurative, it merely expresses God's wrath on sin and the armies of Antichrist at Armageddon. However, the language seems too detailed and descriptive to be considered figurative (Isa. 34:9-17). It could therefore be understood as a certain place which will become desolate and burn eternally as described here -- a place where wild beasts and birds will dwell on the edges of this desolate monument of wrath to men on earth, as in the case of Babylon (Isa. 13:19-22). In Isa. 66:22-24 it speaks of men in the New Earth looking into eternal hell, seeing those who are in eternal torment, so this place and Babylon could be two such openings on the earth where this will take place.³³

Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone: In this day of the Lord's vengeance known as the great tribulation, there will be unparalleled ecological disaster. Before Jesus Christ returns at the end of the great tribulation, one-third of the earth's vegetation, one-third of the oceans, and one-third of fresh waters will be destroyed and unusable (Revelation 8, 16).³⁴

The prophet described Edom's overthrow in terms reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Gen. 19:24-28; Deut. 29:23; Ps. 11:6; Jer. 49:18; Rev. 14:10-11), which lay in the same general direction as Edom from Jerusalem. Edom's actions brought on this destruction. The world's end will be total, and its territory will be uninhabitable from then on (66:24; Rev. 19:3; cf. Lev. 6:13). The absence of specific references to Edom in verses 9-17 helps the reader appreciate that a judgment far beyond that one nation's future is in view. The only reason people will be able to inhabit the earth during the Millennium, following the Tribulation, is because God will renovate it (chs. 35; 40—66). Human sin affects humanity's environment.³⁵

³¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

³⁴ <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

³⁵ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁰It 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.

Malachi (300 years after Isaiah) 1:3,4.

None shall pass through it for ever and ever: There have been no permanent inhabitants of (what has to be describes as a most beautiful site) of Mt Seir, Edom, Petra, since Roman times. No attempt has ever been made to reestablish a state or city in the region of Mt Seir. Until the late 19th century there were no roads in the region at all and only the rare historian made his way into the region to report the devastation and desolation of the region. There are still no through highways to this day although hundreds of tourists, (most are Christian pilgrims) enter Petra every day to be awed by the riches of Culture and architectural splendor now lying dead for almost 2000 years.³⁶

¹¹But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

Cormorant = pelican? Bittern = porcupine.

“Confusion” and “emptiness” = “tohu v’bohu” from Gen 1:2 (gap theory, see Isa 45).³⁷

But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it: Much of the earth will be so destroyed that in many places, only wild animals will be able to live.³⁸

¹²They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none *shall be* there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

Nobles in Horim, Edom took land from the Horites.

[They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing] This verse expresses the idea that Idumea will never have kings, princes, and nobles ruling the land as in ages past, for Israel will possess all the promised land in the days of the Messiah.³⁹

¹³And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, *and* a court for owls.

Jackals = “howling ones.” Owls = “daughters of screaming.”

³⁶ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

³⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

³⁸ <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

³⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

14The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

Wailers and howlers.

Screech owl - tyliyli - "lileth" which also means female demon.

Perhaps idioms are not zoological but demoniacal in vocabulary.⁴⁰

For information on the different creatures mentioned in Isa. 34:11,13-15 see notes on 13:19-22.⁴¹

The King James Version translates wild goat as satyr, which was a mythical demonic creature. The Hebrew word here is sair, which as an adjective means hairy (Genesis 27:11) and as a noun refers to a male goat (Genesis 37:31 and Leviticus 4:23). It is possible that Isaiah means that wild goats will inhabit the desolate regions of Edom, or he may mean that it will be the haunt of demonic spirits. Bultema thinks the best translation "is satyrs, demons, or field devils."

The Hebrew word for night creature is lilith, which is the feminine form of the word "night." Old Jewish superstitions make Lilith a beautiful demon of the night, who seduced men and killed children. It is possible that Isaiah uses the term to describe the demonic habitation of Edom after God's judgment.⁴²

'Lilith:' In ancient Semitic folklore contemporaneous with the Bible (and also in rabbinic literature), this term referred to a group of female demons. They seduced and then killed single men, and they were especially dangerous to nursing mothers and infants. In later rabbinic and kabbalistic folklore, a character with this name was said to be the first wife of Adam. Their parting was not amicable; he later married Eve, and she embarked on a career killing young children. These legends about Adam and Lilith are postbiblical, however, and have no bearing on the term used here.⁴³

15There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

"Great owl" might be arrow and snake.

16Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

[Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read] If one would do this today he would not find one prediction of God that had failed, among the things that should be already fulfilled. Thousands of verses and multiplied thousands of details have been fulfilled to the letter, which

⁴⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

⁴¹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁴² <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

⁴³ Jewish Study Bible

precludes all possibility of guess work on the part of the prophets. This assures us that the innumerable details of predictions to be fulfilled in the future will also come to pass to the letter. God assures us here that not one will fail.

[his spirit it hath gathered them] God's Spirit will gather these creatures commanded by His word to live around this place of everlasting burnings.⁴⁴

Isaiah referred to the prophecies that God commanded him to write down as the "book of the Lord." Whoever lived to see the time of Edom's destruction would have only to look up these prophecies to find agreement between what happened and what was predicted. Prophecy predicts and history reveals what has been in God's mind for all time.⁴⁵

Holy Scripture, Authoritative—History proves Scripture right (Dt 18:22; 1 Sa 3:19-20; 1 Ki 22:28; Jer 28:9). The inspired prophet invited future readers to understand the destruction of the nations in light of the Lord's scroll or book. Prophecy did not come from human dreams, wishes, or ambitions. It came from God's mouth, collected by His Spirit. We can count on the promises and warnings of Scripture to come true in history, for God has issued them.⁴⁶

Search from the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these shall fail. This remarkable statement tells us that Isaiah understood that his words were the words of the LORD. It also tells us that Isaiah meant that his prophecy should be understood literally - poetically, but literally. It also means that Isaiah clearly challenged doubters to "look it up" once the prophecy was fulfilled.

"After Edom has become a wasteland, men will take out the scroll and verify that Isaiah's predictions came true." (Wolf)

Search from the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these shall fail: This time of great tribulation is certainly coming upon the earth. This is beyond all doubt; our part isn't to bring it or to prevent it, but simply to be ready, and to pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).⁴⁷

A different reading: In the Qumran text on this page in line 17 and the first 3 words of line 18 is verse 34:16. This is the next to last verse of chapter 34. If the reading in the Masoretic or received text is faithful reconstruction of Isaiah's actual words then this is one of his most confused constructions and does not conform to his ordinary literary excellence which at almost all times is the work of a genius. The M (Masoretic or received) text appears to me to be grammar too poor to be Isaiah's. The Q text does not contain at least three major words in this sentence found in M. And the construction of one phrase is altered putting a negative in a different location. One of the major verbs in M is also missing in Q. In M "phaqadu" makes little sense since it usually means to visit (as with a stroke or punishment) but here is translated "want" which is taken to be "lack" (NIV) rather than "desire." The M text for this verse actually defies a translation that would not be extremely clumsy with out altering the word order greatly.. Complicating this in M the word "ishah" (woman) is translated "none" in the KJV and "not one"

⁴⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁴⁵ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁶ Disciple's Study Bible

⁴⁷ <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-34.html>

in NIV and thus it is treated like a negative pronoun. Perhaps the simpler reading in Q is to be preferred in this verse.

After the word "one" (" 'achat") M has "me:henah" (from them: fpl. prn). This is not in Q. In M after the word "re'uthah" (her mate) the words " l'o phaquadu" (they shall not visit, trans: find) negative + verb pf 3pl is not found in Q. There are two negatives in M, only one in Q. For this phrase Q = "ve-achat lo' ne'adarah 'ishah re'uthah ki' " and not one doctrine will lack her mate because..." The next phrase differs slightly and the Q text seems to me to be preferred. The phrase translated "for my mouth it has commanded and his spirit it has gathered them" (KJV) has the confusion of possessive pronoun making the writer and God alternate as subject.. This is arbitrarily corrected in NIV since there is no suf. in M on the word "mouth.". However Q writes the m on "mouth" plainly with "kiy' phiyhu hu' tsivah ve-ruch-ho hu'ah qibatsan." The m sufs on mouth and spirit are made emphatic in Q by the addition of the m pronouns and the translation therefore is "because his own mouth has commanded and his own spirit has gathered them." M does not have a suf on "mouth" although NIV translates it as though it has m. It is more likely that the suf found in Q is the correct reading. Thus the verse in Q reads "Seek you out of the book of YHWH and read: for not one doctrine will lack her mate because his own mouth has commanded and his own spirit has gathered them." Of course what this means is that all the promises of God will find their fulfillment but particularly those in this and the preceding chapter.⁴⁸

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.

God often speaks of eternal generations of natural men on earth.⁴⁹

they shall possess it: The wild animals will possess Edom for all generations. This has been the case. It was looked forward to for centuries by the faithful whose anticipations were not fruitless. Neither will the hope that those who still look for the fullness of Zion be disappointed.⁵⁰

How does this picture of devastation, so thorough that no human beings remain alive, harmonize with other revelation concerning the Tribulation? According to Revelation 6:8 and 9:18, half of the world's population will have perished by the end of the sixth trumpet judgment. Many more devastating judgments will fall on earth-dwellers after the sixth trumpet judgment, specifically the seven bowl judgments, the worst ones of all in the Tribulation. Therefore what Isaiah pictured may be what the earth will look like at the very end of the Tribulation, just before Jesus Christ returns to the earth. There will be some people left alive on the earth then, but Isaiah's description was perhaps hyperbolic to make the point that God will judge all the earth's inhabitants. A common amillennial understanding of this chapter, is that it describes the final judgment of humankind, at the end of history—just before the beginning of eternity.⁵¹

⁴⁸ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

⁴⁹ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/isa34-35.htm>

⁵¹ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>