

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 34

Theme: God sent Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Judah's perpetual enemy Edom and other neighbor nations.

Outline:

- 1-4 Terrible Warning to All Nations
- 5-8 God in Vengeance Cursed Edom
- 9-15 Edom to be Perpetually Desolate
- 16-17 Scripture Guarantees Fulfillment

Preparatory Reading: Numbers 20:14-21; Psalm 74,83,137; Isaiah 13,63; Jeremiah 25,27; 49:7-22; Ezekiel 35,36; Obadiah 1; Malachi 1:1-5; Revelation 19.

Related Links:

- A. *Exposition of Isaiah 13* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/isaiah-13.pdf>.
- B. *Exposition of Malachi 1* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/malachi-1.pdf>.

Introduction:

- A. Setting the context is important in any book or chapter of the Bible, but especially obscure chapters.
 - 1. However, we do have Idumea or Edom clearly mentioned here with war against it and area nations.
 - 2. By comparison to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, this is easily seen to be the work of King Nebuchadnezzar.
 - 3. Isaiah had comforted Judah about enemies ... Israel and Syria (7-8) ... Assyria (10,22,29-33) ... Babylon (13-14) ... Moab (15-16) ... Syria (17) ... Ethiopia (18) ... Egypt (19-20) ... and Tyre (23).
 - 4. He will sum up the judgment of all Judah's area enemies ... using Edom as his focus instead of Assyria or Babylon ... and then comfort Israel with promises of better times including Messiah.
- B. *Esau* was Jacob's brother = hairy = *Edom* for the red pottage = *Idumea* (the Greek/Roman version).
 - 1. Other references to Esau and Edom and Idumea are the city of Bozrah and location of Mt. Seir.
 - 2. God had a curse on Esau's descendants, which now were the inhabitants of Edom, south of Judah.
 - 3. God told Rebekah while Esau was in her womb that the twin Jacob would be over him (Gen 25:23).
 - 4. Esau was profane in religious things – marrying Hittite wives (Genesis 26:34-35; 27:46; 28:6-9).
 - 5. His family, Edom, would not allow Israel to pass through from Egypt to Canaan (Num 20:14-21).
 - 6. David crushed the Edomites and put them in subjection to Israel (II Samuel 8:13; I Chron 18:12).
 - 7. Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat (think Athaliah) beat them but allowed a rebellion (II Chron 21:8-10).
 - 8. Amaziah, Uzziah's father, beat them in battle but humbled 10,000 (II Kgs 14:7; II Chr 25:11-12).
 - 9. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites cheered and joined in against Judah (Ps 137:7).
 - 10. God saw it as fratricide – murder of an innocent brother in the time of his calamity (Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:10-14; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:5-6).
 - 11. God cursed them to utter destruction (Isaiah 34:5-17; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:1-21; Malachi 1:1-5).
 - 12. Judas Maccabees beat them, and so did John Hyrcanus, and Trajan eliminated them in 105 A.D.
 - 13. Keep in mind all of God's operations in time are the results of eternal decrees (Pr 16:4; Acts 15:18).
- C. Isaiah 63:1-4 is similar to the prophecy here, but the blood is that of His enemies, not His saving blood.
- D. This is another chapter like Isaiah 13 ... universal terms for limited scope ... cataclysmic events for military/political change ... promised desolation taking centuries to complete ... though initiated soon.
- E. The Bible ends with very similar descriptive language in Revelation 6:9-11 and 19:11-21 for Christ.

- F. All the children of God should take comfort in what He will do to His and our enemies in great fury.
- G. He does not forget those that only touch or mock His anointed (Psalm 105:14-15; 137:7; Rev 6:9-11).
- H. Rome is not all Jesus will destroy at His return ... add Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Communism, etc.

***** *Terrible Warning to All Nations – Verses 1-4* *****

1 Come 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.

- A. Indicated in the introduction above, Nebuchadnezzar crushed Judah and its neighbors.
- B. Isaiah, the prophet of the most high God, called the world to hear about their own ruin.
 - 1. Jeremiah 100 years later also gave call and warning (Jer 25:1-38; 27:1-11; 49:7-22).
 - 2. The events here are 110 years or more from the end of Hezekiah's reign (Je 39:1-9).
 - 3. Isaiah will conclude this chapter by calling men to check God's book (Is 34:16-17).
- C. World history is His story ... the work of Almighty God among the nations for His will.
 - 1. Daniel, a very wise man, knew future history of Israel from Jeremiah (Dan 9:1-3).
 - 2. Jesus told hearers they could know the future of the Jews by Daniel (Matt 24:13-21).
- D. Here is another case (of many) where the Spirit used universal terms for limited things.
 - 1. The message was not to *all that is in the earth*, for it was only to Judah's neighbors.
 - 2. The message was not to *all things that come forth of the world* but Judah's neighbors.
 - 3. Compared to the earth's land mass and population, those here were a small minority.

2 For 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.

- A. The LORD God of Judah – Jehovah – was indignant and furious at Judah's neighbors.
 - 1. **Indignation.** Disdain, contempt, anger, wrath. There are 41 occurrences in the Bible.
 - 2. **Fury.** Fierce passion, wild anger, frenzied rage. The Bible has 72 occurrences in it.
 - 3. Of course, this God is hardly known in these perilous times of fables (II Tim 4:3-4).
- B. His indignation and fury were at those nations close to Judah that had harmed it before.
 - 1. Our God did not think it fair to punish Judah and not punish its neighbors (Jer 25:29).
 - 2. He would punish the neighboring nations much worse than Judah (Jer 30:11; 46:28).
 - 3. They were guilty of similar sins, though with less warning, but they were reprobate.
- C. The *all nations* and *all their armies* here refers only to the close neighbors of the Jews.
 - 1. The rest of the world was not in the scope of the prophecy for ignorance of Judah.
 - 2. The church, kingdom, and people of God sets the scope of the Bible (Deut 32:8-9).
 - 3. Outside the Middle East, the Bible has little or nothing to say of the rest of the earth.
- D. Learn that verb tenses in prophecies may be past for future or other exchanges as well.
 - 1. The past tense is clearly used in the last half of the verse for events 150 years future.
 - 2. The next verse declares these events are yet future with three uses of the future *shall*.

3. Keep this in mind lest you get hung up on verb tenses in Isaiah and other prophets.
4. God is able to call those things which be not as though they were (Rom 4:17; 8:30).
5. Jehovah of the Bible operates above verb tenses by virtue of ability and power to accomplish and perform His purposes with absolute certainty (Dan 4:35; Job 9:4; 34:29; 40:9-12; Job 42:2; Pr 21:30; Is 43:13; Acts 5:39; 11:17). Give Him glory!

3 Their 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.

- A. These are the graphic and severe inspired words of the Holy Spirit about God's violence.
 1. There would be many dead bodies, and they would lie in the open sending up a stink.
 2. There would be so much blood flowing that it could wash away the very mountains.
 3. The words depict the carnage of overwhelming war affecting bodies and their blood.
- B. This is how God judges His enemies and the enemies of His people. He loves His own.

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 fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

- A. These apocalyptic words of cataclysmic events in the natural world are for effect of war.
 1. Review Isaiah 13 to find similar language about the fall of Babylon to the Medes.
 2. The terms can be applied to lofty leaders and/or to cosmic events comparable to war.
 3. Jesus used such terms, and so did Peter at Pentecost (Matt 24:21-31; Acts 2:14-21).
 4. These are the similitudes of prophets that the Bible tells us they used (Hosea 12:10).
 5. We use similar idioms, as, *The world is upside down*, or, *Its raining cats and dogs*.
- B. The great invasion by Nebuchadnezzar and his total success would be like these events.
- C. The overthrow and elimination of long-established nations would be like these events.
- D. As easily as a storm knocks down leaves or figs, so the Chaldeans would cause havoc.

***** *God in Vengeance Cursed Edom – Verses 5-8* *****

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

- A. God has a sword of judgment – for death (Rom 13:4) – decreed in heaven to violence.
 1. A sword was the instrument or tool of violence in war and in capital punishment.
 2. It is a heavenly sword and bathed there, for it was by heaven's appointment to kill.
 3. It is the sword of the LORD, as stated in the next verse, and so used by God Himself.
 4. Heaven is a holy place, and the sword being there means it is holy and just judgment.
- B. God's decrees are as good as the event (Ps 115:3; Pr 16:4; Dan 4:34-35; Acts 15:18).

- C. Idumea is the Greek and Roman name for the country of Edom; both names mean red.
 - 1. Esau was born with red hair covering his body, so he was called Esau for being hairy.
 - 2. He sold his birthright to Jacob for some red pottage, so he was called Edom for red.
 - 3. The Greeks and the Romans used Idumea for Edom, and their word also means red.
 - 4. In the King James, Edom is found 82 times; Edomites 13 times; Idumea only 4 times.
- D. This verse is God's planned judgment of Esau's descendants to start in about 115 years.
- E. God had a curse upon Esau's descendants, which now were the inhabitants of Edom.
 - 1. All of God's operations in time are the results of eternal decrees (Pr 16:4; Ac 15:18).
 - 2. God told Rebekah while Esau was in her that Jacob would be over him (Gen 25:23).
 - 3. Esau was profane in religious things – Hittite wives (Gen 26:34-35; 27:46; 28:6-9).
 - 4. Edom would not allow Israel to pass through from Egypt to Canaan (Nu 20:14-21).
 - 5. David crushed them and put them in subjection to Israel (II Sam 8:13; I Chr 18:12).
 - 6. Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat (think Athaliah) allowed a rebellion (II Chron 21:8-10).
 - 7. Amaziah, Uzziah's father, defeated / disgraced them (II Kgs 14:7; II Chr 25:11-12).
 - 8. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, they cheered and participated (Psalm 137:7).
 - 9. God saw it as fratricide – murder of an innocent brother in the time of his calamity (Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:10-14; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:5-6).
 - 10. God cursed them to utter destruction (Isaiah 34:5-17; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 1:1-21; Malachi 1:1-5).

6 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.

- A. The LORD God of the Bible has a sword, and He is not afraid or timid to use it to kill.
- B. The terminology in this verse is taken from killing sacrifices, which He did to Edom.
 - 1. The Jews easily understood such words from experience with their bloody sacrifices.
 - 2. The intent is not sacrifice of animals, for those being sacrificed were Esau's family.
 - 3. It is simply one more similitude or metaphor that we can easily transfer to humans.
- C. Bozrah, used five times in the Bible, was a major city in the land of Edom or Idumea.

7 And 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.

- A. Continuing language of sacrifices – three animals are listed – unicorns, bullocks, bulls.
 - 1. Unicorns were not working animals, so buffalo, rhinoceros, or oryx will justify God.
 - 2. Bullocks can be either young or castrated bulls, like geldings are castrated stallions.
 - 3. The prophetic warning is not the killing of animals, but the Edomites like animals.
- B. The land of Edom was soaked with blood, not of animals, but rather the family of Esau.

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

- A. The LORD took vengeance for all Edom had done against the Israelites for many years.
 - 1. The twins fought in the womb; God answered Rebekah against Esau (Gen 25:23).
 - 2. Edom would not allow Israel to pass through from Egypt to Canaan (Nu 20:14-21).
 - 3. The cruel Edomites celebrated and participated with Babylon (Ps 137:7; Ezek 35:5).
- B. Israel begged God to remember Edom's cruelty – like martyrs (Ps 137:7; Rev 6:9-11).
- C. God does not forget righteous vengeance, though His timing seldom matches our own.

***** *Edom to be Perpetually Desolate – Verses 9-15* *****

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

- A. God would eventually make Edom a wasteland where nothing was fertile or productive.
- B. Streams, instead of bringing water for agriculture, would be like pitch, or resin or tar.
- C. The dust or dirt of Edom, instead of promoting growth, would be brimstone for fire.
- D. The combination would leave the nation like burning pitch or a flaming resin or tar.

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.

- A. The similitude ... of total destruction from a former inhabitable place ... was perpetual.
- B. Note the four terms of perpetuity – not be quenched night nor day, go up for ever, from generation to generation, none shall pass through it for ever and ever.
- C. Get a clear view and grasp of God's vengeance on enemies, like hell's eternal torment.
- D. The curse existed, but for many years Edom lived sufficiently well. Be warned, sinner.

11 But 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.

- A. Isaiah described the barren desolation of Edom as a place for four wild birds to dwell.
- B. God, in a figure of speech, would measure and design Edom for confusing emptiness.
 - 1. The line may refer to builders' rulers, straight lines, measuring devices, levels, etc.
 - 2. The stones may refer to plummets or plumb lines for vertical measurement, etc.
 - 3. In any and all cases, the metaphor is God's plan to thoroughly destroy all of Edom.

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

- A. Recall the dukes of Edom (Gen 36:9-19). There would no rulers of the cursed nation.
- B. If the nation, which was to be destroyed, called for its rulers, there would be none left.

13 And 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.

- A. The former palaces and fortresses of Edom, high in the rocks, would be utterly desolate.
- B. Thorns, nettles, brambles, wild creatures, and owls would take over the former nation.

14 The 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.

- A. Animals of all kinds, desert and water animals, would meet up and inhabit former Edom.
- B. What is a satyr? A wild goat looks like a satyr or a mystical creature of speech. Easy.
- C. What are the *Monsters of the Midway* ... the NFL Chicago Bears ... and no one fusses.

15 There 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.

- A. Edom would be reduced to great desolation so that owls and vultures would live there.
- B. The wild birds would have mates to reproduce and keep the desolate place inhabited.
- C. The prophecy describes a land so desolate that these man-avoiding birds will be there.

***** *Scripture Guarantees Fulfillment – Verses 16-17* *****

16 Seek 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.

- A. This is most likely the book of Isaiah, for the words, *no one of these shall fail*, in context.
 - 1. Daniel figured out future things out from studying books e.g. Jeremiah (Dan 9:1-3).
 - 2. The reference to specific things just written and spoken by Isaiah are pretty clear.
 - 3. The book of the LORD at large would include many more prophecies against Edom.
- B. Precise facts of Isaiah 34:15 are at stake ... the vultures would have mates and reproduce.

- C. And also, each individual prophecy against Edom would have its matched fulfillment.
- D. There are other books of God, of His decrees, but this here is a great appeal to scripture.
 - 1. What a creative, wonderful way to say ... *It is written* ... it shall surely come to pass.
 - 2. Jesus said they could know the abomination of desolation from Daniel (Matt 24:15).
- E. God's Spirit had commanded Isaiah's mouth (and thus his pen) for each prophecy.
- F. God's Spirit had also gathered all the wild and doleful creatures that would take over.

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.

- A. The mighty God divided the land of Edom to the wild beasts like Israel divided the land.
- B. The wild beasts and birds mentioned would fulfill the promise and be there perpetually.
- C. This is the end of all that set themselves by word or deed against God (Psalm 58:6-11).