

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 34

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 34

Theme: "When the LORD Destroys!"

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 34:16-17 (KJV) "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. 17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein."

INTRODUCTION

The focus of Isaiah 34 is the wrath of God: God Almighty against the rest of the sin-sick world. This perennial problem exists since the fall of man in the days of Genesis. Man will ignore God and try his best to will God out of existence. This act of utter futility will continue as long as sinful men exist on this earth. They will never wish for the will of God to be done. They will resist God as long as there is breath in their sin-filled bodies. No amount of punishment or calamities on earth can turn sinful men away from their sins and toward God. This

miraculous act can only be accomplished through the washing of the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The LORD will always be victorious over all evil men but that has never stopped them from undermining and attacking God and God's people. Evil nations and wicked men will be thoroughly destroyed by God. The warning is in Isaiah 34 where we will witness the fierceness of the LORD's destruction. The certainty of the prophecies against the evil nations is sure. They will all come to pass just as the LORD has prophesied.

The purpose of this chapter is to warn evil nations of their impending doom. Perhaps these nations will turn to God the way the Ninevites did in the days of Jonah. This chapter also serves as an encouragement to God's people as they will witness how the justice of God will ultimately prevail. No wicked nation will escape the judgment of God. They will all be dealt with and none can escape Him who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end of all things on this earth.

OUTLINE

1. The judgment against the nations (vv.1-10);
2. The desolation of the nations! (vv. 11-15);
3. These prophecies will not fail! (vv. 16-17).

COMMENTARY

The judgment against nations – 34:1-10

The message of the LORD was to Gentile nations, not God's nation Israel. The LORD called on the nations of the world to hear and to listen. The significance and importance of the message was emphasized. The indignation (rage or strife) of the LORD was upon all nations. The fury (displeasure) of the LORD was upon their armies. The destruction of the nations by the LORD was at the doors. The target of the anger of the LORD would be their armies. They would not be able to stand against the indignation of the LORD!

The LORD hath utterly destroyed them (total destruction). The LORD hath delivered them to the slaughter -- guided them to the place where they were all slaughtered. The use of the name LORD (Jehovah) is significant. Even though the LORD had no covenant with these nations of the world, the covenantal name of the LORD was used here. The reason was that God wanted the nations of the world to know that the source of their total destruction was the God of Israel. The deliberate use of the past tense to describe their destruction is also significant. These nations were doomed for destruction and there would be no escape. The certainty of their future destruction was captured by the use of the past tense.

Verse 3 – The slain of these nations shall be cast out (thrown out like refuse). Their slain would not be given any burial after death. It was the

worst indignity to throw away a dead body. At least after a proper burial, the loved ones would have a place to go and remember the dead. But when the dead was thrown away like refuse, he would soon be forgotten as if he had never lived and had no impact on anyone's life. His stink would come out of his dead body. What a way to end a life . . . he stank! The armies and nations were destroyed and there was none to remove their bodies and to give them a proper burial. They stank. Their blood covered the whole mountain as if the mountain had melted.

Verse 4 – The heavenly realm would reflect the wrath of God when the LORD struck against sinful men. The Bible described it as the host of heaven shall be dissolved and the heavens rolled together like a scroll. The host shall fall down as the leaf falling off the vine and as the fig falling from the fig tree. This figure of speech described the great forces of the LORD that would be hurled against the nations and their armies. The host of heaven shall be dissolved – this described the heavens disappearing from sight as if it was going to fall. This meant that it would be very near the horizon of the earth. The heavens rolled together like a scroll – this described the clouds gathering in great thickness and appearing dark and frightful on the horizon as if they would fall onto the earth. The leaf falling from the vine – this described total and complete destruction because after the leaves had fallen off, the vine would appear wilted and dead. The figs falling from the fig trees would cover

the face of the ground beneath the fig tree.

Verse 5 – The sword of the LORD shall be bathed in heaven, that is, soaked with the blood of God’s enemies. This meant that the sword from heaven would come down upon the enemies of God. In the verse, the enemy was I-du-me’a who was also known as Edom or Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. The Edomites, though related to Israel had always been enemies of Israel. They had been against Israel since the beginning of Israel’s journey out of Egypt. In Numbers 20:14-18, Israel asked Edom for permission to pass through their land on their way to the Promised Land which would have saved Israel an enormous amount of time. Israel even promised Edom that they would not take any portion of the land and that they would pay for whatever food and water they consumed. But the Edomites flatly refused and even threatened them with war! This animosity lasted for hundreds of years and when Jerusalem was eventually destroyed by the Babylonians, Edom stood by and cheered the Babylonians on.

Here the LORD would destroy Edom. The Edomites were called the people of God’s curse. They would be subjected to God’s judgment. Nations like Edom were plentiful. They were against Israel not realizing that they were in fact against the LORD of Israel as Israel was a nation doing the will of God.

The Messiah is to come from Israel. If Israel is destroyed, there will be no salvation for the whole world.

Verse 6 – The sword of the LORD was filled with blood. This imagery was that of sacrifices brought before the LORD by the people when they went to the temple. The blood of the lambs and goats and the fat of the kidneys of rams were from “clean animals” used for sacrifices unto the LORD. The amount of blood that would be seen in the slaughter of the Edomites was likened to that of the killing of the animals for sacrifices, thorough and bloody.

The city in Edom where this would take place was Bozrah (which meant fortress). “Bozrah” was one of the chief cities of Idumea. It was a city of great antiquity and was known as “Bostra” among the Greeks and Romans. It was mentioned in the Scriptures as a city of the Edomites (Isaiah 63:1; Jeremiah 49:13, Jeremiah 49:22; Amos 1:12) but once it was mentioned as a city of Moab (Jeremiah 48:24). It probably belonged to the Edomites and the Moabites at different points in time as the possession of the city changed hands due to wars. Bozrah lay southeast of Edrei, one of the capitals of Bashan, and was thus not properly within the limits of the Edomites. It was north of the Ammonites, or in the region of Auranitis, or in what is now called Houran. It was evident, therefore, that during the time of Isaiah, the Edomites had extended their conquests to that region [source: Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Swordsearcher 6.2]. The slaughter was great in I-du-me’a.

Verse 7 – The unicorns (either the rhinoceros or a species of wild goat) would come down with them, including the bullocks and bulls. This was a description of the total destruction of all the important people, like kings and princes, in Edom. They would all be brought down by the LORD. Their land shall be soaked with blood and their dust made fat with fatness, that is, the blood would flow so copiously that the land would become fertile because of it!

Verse 8 – The day of Edom's destruction was called the day of the LORD's vengeance. It was also known as the year of recompences for the controversy (strife) of Zion. The message was clear - the severe judgment of the LORD against Edom was based entirely upon what Edom had done to Israel. Edom and Israel were brothers but Edom did not extend any help when Israel had needed it the most. Edom's long strife against Israel would now come to a head by the hand of the LORD against Edom. Vengeance was the LORD's and He would collect from Edom. Edom was made to pay for what it had done against Israel.

Verse 9 – The streams shall be turned into pitch, that is, dry ground. The dust of the earth which was supposed to be soft and powdery would be hardened into brimstone. The land shall become a burning pitch, charred like it had been burned. Edom would become a land devoid of life and unable to sustain life. Whatever fruitfulness the land of Edom had once enjoyed would be gone forever. Edom would become a wasteland because

God would destroy it as demanded by His vengeance and justice.

Verse 10 – It shall not be quenched night or day. There would be no sign of the slightest relief upon this God-forsaken land. The smoke shall go up forever. This meant that Edom would continue to burn until it was all burned up. Any streams that used to exist in Edom would disappear forever. From generation to generation, Edom would lie wasted and no one shall pass through it forever and ever. Towns and cities were places where travellers would pass through so that they could find food, water and shelter. If no one passes through a place, it is likely to be void of life and any source that can sustain life.

Where is Edom today? It is a wasteland.

The desolation of the nations!

– 34:11-15

The land of Edom would not be inhabited by people but by the cormorant - the pelican and the bittern which is "a bird with long legs and neck, that stalks among reeds and sedge, feeding upon fish." [Taken from Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Swordsearcher 6.2.] These birds thrived in wasteland.

The owl and the raven, birds of prey that lived in the wilds, also shall dwell in it. Instead of people, Edom would become a wilderness with birds of prey as her inhabitants. The LORD would stretch out a line of confusion upon it -- using a plummet line the LORD would mark out where the demarcation of the confusion would

be. This was also true for the stones of emptiness. The size of Edom's destruction and desolation would be carefully marked out by the LORD so that no humans would be allowed to dwell therein except for wild birds.

Verse 12 – “They shall call”. The word “they” likely was a general reference to some people rather than to a specific people or person. “They” would call the nobles to take charge of the kingdom but none would be found. All her princes had become nothing -- ceased to exist. There would be no one to resurrect the nation once the LORD had devastated it. All the royalties would disappear as they would have no subjects to rule over or to usher them back into power. A ruler is as strong as her subjects. When the subjects are wild birds, there can be no throne to resurrect.

Verse 13 – Thorns shall come up in her palaces. This meant that fast growing thorny plants would occupy the palaces of the Edomites. Nettles and brambles (prickly plants and thistles) would be found in the fortresses, alluding to Bozrah. It shall become the habitation of dragons -- jackal or a hideous creature. It would also become a court (an abode) for owls. The palaces which were once homes of the kings and queens would become homes for the wild animals and birds.

Verse 14 – The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island. This meant that desert animals like hyenas, wolves and jackals would meet with the wild beasts of the island which were unique

to themselves signifying the total complete desolation of Edom. The satyr (shaggy he goat) shall cry to his fellow and the screeching owls shall also rest there with these wild beasts and they shall find a place of rest. They would make their home in this land of Edom which was once inhabited by people.

Verse 15 – The great owl would make her nest and lay and hatch and gather under her shadow. The vulture would gather with her mate. This described families of wild creatures making their homes in the land of Edom – the laying of eggs, hatching and multiplying speaks of a no return for the Edomites. It was utterly impossible for the Edomites to rebuild as their land would be overrun by wild birds and creatures.

These are verses of pictorial language conveying the absolute impossibility for Edom to exist again on its previous land which was once thought to be impregnable.

Edom's case serves as a reflection of all the nations of the world probably because of its impregnability and supposedly eternal existence on the mountain top, untouched by the world. The LORD's sure judgment will devastate Edom to the point of no return. This, the LORD will do to all the nations of the world. Israel will be the only exception, not because it is less sinful but because the LORD has a plan for Israel to save the world from her sins.

**These prophecies will not fail!
– 34:16-17**

The prophetic judgment against Edom and the nations of the world will not fail. The Word of the LORD declared imperatively that we are to seek out of the Book of the LORD. We are commanded by the LORD to inquire diligently until we find the truth. After finding the truth, we are to read it (call out loud by name), understand it, define it and tell others about it. None of these prophecies will fail. They shall all come to pass.

The phrase “none shall want her mate” simply means that none of these prophecies shall lack complete fulfilment. The mouth of the LORD has commanded them and they will be fulfilled. The Spirit of the LORD has gathered them (assembled them) in their respective order and they will be fulfilled accordingly. The Spirit of God and God Himself will ensure their timely and orderly fulfilment.

Verse 17 – The LORD has determined that Edom will fall and be reduced to nothing; that wild beasts and birds will live in it. These wild beasts and birds carry out the LORD’s will by their movements and acts of dwelling in Edom. The thorns and thistles grow according to the LORD’s guidance and direct stipulation. The LORD has divided them by line, that is, like a surveyor drawing the line of demarcation of a property as to where everything should go. These wild plants and creatures shall possess the land of Edom from generation to generation for as long as the LORD so determined! Amen.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 34:1-17

TUESDAY: Isaiah 34:1-17

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 34:1-17

THURSDAY: Isaiah 34:1-17

FRIDAY: Isaiah 34:1-17.

Discussion Questions

- 1. How do you view the nations of the earth today in relation to their treatment of Israel? Are their treatment of present day Israel similar to the treatment of OT Israel in the days of Edom and other gentile nations? Please explain.

- 2. On what theological basis will you justify to someone that God will destroy the nations of today sometime in the future? Please explain.

3. Will nations like Singapore and USA, that are quite sympathetic to Israel today, suffer the same fate as all the nations of the earth? Please explain.

6. Will God punish and destroy a local church today in the same way that he has destroyed Edom?

4. Is the total destruction of this world the only just way to punish all the nations for the evil and sins that they have committed against God? Please explain.

7. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?

5. Do you think what happened to Edom will ever happen to Israel? Why or why not?
