

## Isaiah 34 The Lord Contends against Enemies of His People

The LORD warns the nations that He will recompense the suffering of His people and maintain His right in final judgment.

- 1) The LORD warns of final judgment (vv. 1-7, 9-17).
  - a) The LORD summons the nations (v. 1). Jeremiah 18:7-8 discloses a principle for receiving announcements of judgment. God says, "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it."
  - b) The LORD announces His judgments through the prophets (vv. 2-4, 16).
    - i) Verses 2-4 is the nations' preview of the end of their current path, revealed through Isaiah.
    - ii) Verse 16 calls upon nations to "seek and read from the book of the LORD." Some understand this to be a metaphor for God's secret counsels. However, it makes more sense to understand it as the prophetic Scriptures in which God makes known some of His 'secrets,' since humanity is commanded to "seek and read."
  - c) The LORD forecasts the final judgment with temporal judgments (vv. 5-7, 9-17).
    - i) The destruction of Edom in the near future will serve as a warning of the destruction of all enemy nations in the final judgment.
    - ii) Matthew 24:8 "All these are but the beginning of birth pains."
    - iii) Revelation: 7 seals=a quarter of the earth to be destroyed; 7 trumpets=a third to be destroyed; 7 thunders=two-thirds? (don't know because sealed in order to move to final judgment; Rev. 10:3-7); 7 bowls=complete destruction (16:17 "It is done.")
  - d) How should we respond to disastrous providences? Consider Luke 13:1-5 "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
  - e) Since all these things are going to happen, what sort of people ought you to be? Consider 2 Peter 3:11-13
- 2) The LORD will recompense the suffering of His people in final judgment (v. 8).
  - a) God has "a year of recompense for the cause of Zion." Zion begins as a place name, which is then transferred to the people of that place, which is then transferred to the people of God as a covenantal reality (Heb. 12:22).
  - b) The LORD personally identifies with the plight of His people. King and kingdom are inseparable.
    - i) Matthew 25:45-56: "'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
    - ii) Acts 9:4: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
    - iii) Revelation 3:9: "Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie-behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you." (cf. Rev. 6:10-11; 16:6; 18:20; 19:2)
  - c) How does this affect you? Jesus said to the martyrs, "Wait a little longer" (Rev. 6:10-11). Psalm 73 indicates that being short-sighted regarding injustice can lead to despair; but being eternity-sighted can renew hope. Memorize Isaiah 40:27-31.
- 3) The LORD will maintain His right in final judgment (v. 2, 5-7, 10).
  - a) "devoted them to destruction" (vv. 2, 5)— *ḥāram* means devoted to God; while they committed injustices toward the saints and mankind in general, their sin was ultimately an offense against God
  - b) "a sacrifice in Bozrah"—Edom is a sacrifice, indicating that their destruction is to satisfy divine justice
  - c) "its smoke shall go up forever"—perpetual witness to God's justice
  - d) Let us be more concerned for the honor of God than for our own honor.