

Nations Judged

Isaiah 34

By Scott Huckaby

4/16/2023

**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

Isaiah 34:1-7 – Fury of God’s Judgment (NIV)

Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! ²The Lord is angry with all nations; his wrath is on all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter.

³Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will stink; the mountains will be soaked with their blood.

⁴All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree. ⁵My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed. ⁶The sword of the Lord is bathed in blood, it is covered with fat—the blood of lambs and goats, fat from the kidneys of rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. ⁷And the wild oxen will fall with them, the bull calves and the great bulls. Their land will be drenched with blood, and the dust will be soaked with fat.

v1 – Who does the Lord want to hear Him?

Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people:
Everyone in the world and all who come out of the world.

- In light of how terrible the great tribulation will be, how prophecy has been fulfilled, and how the stage is set for the tribulation, we should hear and take heed.

Who comes out of the world?

This are those who’ve died and are either present with the Lord in heaven or awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment in Hades (the pace of the dead).

How do we know Hades is not Purgatory?

There is no Purgatory where a Christian’s soul goes to after death to be cleansed of the sins that had not been fully satisfied during life. Jesus died to pay the penalty for all of our sins...

Romans 5:8 – *God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

To say that we must also suffer for our sins is to say that Jesus’ suffering was insufficient.

How else do we know purgatory is not biblical?

Hebrews 9:27 – *it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*

This mortal life is all there is to establish were we will be spending eternity. All who persist in rejecting God provision for eternal life during their mortal life will get the desire of their heart to be separated from God for eternity.

Where does the doctrine of purgatory come from?

1 Corinthians 3:15 – *If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

The illustration of things going through fire is a description of believers’ works being judged. If our works are of good quality “gold, silver, costly stones,” they will pass through the fire unharmed, and we will be rewarded for them. If our works are of poor quality “wood, hay, and straw,” they will be consumed by the fire, and there will be no reward.

- The passage does not say believers pass through the fire, but that a believer’s works pass through the fire.
- The believer will be “escaping through the flames,” not “being cleansed by the flames.”

v2 – What is 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, this passage as an announcement of the judgment to come upon the nations during the Great Tribulation.

What is the Great Tribulation?

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

How is the stage being set for the Tribulation?

- Israel is back in the land setting the stage for a rebuilt temple 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; 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 (Revelation 13:11-15; 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 what the Bible says will happen between Russia and Israel in Ezekiel 38-39.

How is it that *the indignation of the LORD is against all nations*?

This warning is not directed to Israel, but to the Gentile nations because God’s people will escape the terrors of the great tribulation. 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).

v2-3 – What will become of the nations during the Great Tribulation?

They will be utterly destroyed. We know from other passages that in God’s mercy there will be nations that have a surviving remnant who are faithful to God.

v4 – What will become of the host of heaven the Great Tribulation?

The spiritual realm will be purged of all the fallen angels...

Revelation 12:9 – *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Why do you think the holy angels might be looking forward to the revealing of the children of God?

Romans 8:19 – *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

The spiritual warfare will end when Satan and his fellow demons are cast out.

v5 – Which nation is specifically called out for God’s judgment during the Great Tribulation?

Indeed it shall come down on Edom: The Edomites were near neighbors to Israel (descendants of Esau), 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 is singled out to represent all the Gentile nations that have oppressed Israel because they had such a deep-ingrained hatred of Israel.

v6 – What does it mean *the sword of the LORD is filled 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 – *And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs*

What is the significance of the reference to sacrifice in the midst of God’s judgment of the nations?

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 at Armageddon will be something of a payment for sin. It will also be a consequence for sin and a “reset” in preparation for the new dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom.

v7 – What is significant about the *wild oxen* mentioned here?

The King James Version translates wild oxen as unicorns; wild oxen is the preferred translation.

- Wild oxen were not used in the sacrifices. Possibly therefore Isaiah is using animal metaphors for the important people and leaders of Edom.

Isaiah 34:8-17 – The Land is Made Desolate (NIV)

⁸ *For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of retribution, to uphold Zion’s cause.* ⁹ *Edom’s streams will be turned into pitch, her dust into burning sulfur; her land will become blazing pitch!* ¹⁰ *It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again.* ¹¹ *The desert owl and screech owl will possess it; the great owl and the raven will nest there. God will stretch out over Edom the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation.* ¹² *Her nobles will have nothing there to be called a kingdom, all her princes will vanish away.* ¹³ *Thorns will overrun her citadels, nettles and brambles her strongholds. She will become a haunt for jackals, a home for owls.* ¹⁴ *Desert creatures will meet with hyenas, and wild goats will bleat to each other; there the night creatures will also lie down and find for themselves places of rest.* ¹⁵ *The owl will nest there and lay eggs, she will hatch them, and care for her young under the shadow*

of her wings; there also the falcons will gather, each with its mate.¹⁶ Look in the scroll of the Lord and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together.¹⁷ He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure. They will possess it forever and dwell there from generation to generation.

v8 – What is the reason given here for the Great Tribulation?

For the cause of Zion: It is for the sake of God's people, Israel... to bring the nation to the point of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah and preparing them for the Millennial Kingdom when the promises of God to Israel will be realized.

v9 – What will become of the earth during the Great Tribulation?

Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone: There will be unparalleled ecological disaster; it will be hell on earth. 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 and 16).

v10 – Will the Tribulation result in parts of the earth that no one will ever go?

Possibly, but we know that God will remove much of the curse so why wouldn't He also clean up the pollution? Most likely, this is a reference to the eternal impact of the Tribulation... there will be people in hell because of the deceptions during that time.

v11 – How does this reinforce that there will be uninhabited areas following the Tribulation?

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. Perhaps God leaves them to remind people during the Millennial Kingdom of the devastating impact of sin and giving them another reason to look forward to the Eternal State when there will be a new earth.

v12 – To what kingdom will the nobles and princes of Edom be called?

This has to be the Millennial Kingdom. But since the nobles and princes of Edom hated God's people, they will be destroyed and thus not be around to enter the Millennial Kingdom.

v13 – What would become of the kingdom of Edom?

It would be among the deserted places where no one would live, only wild animals. It is in modern-day Jordan to where Israel likely escapes during the Tribulation. But they

are being hunted by the Antichrist and his forces, maybe even using nukes to try and kill off God's people.

v14 – Is the reference here to wild goats significant?

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 meant that wild goats would inhabit the desolate regions of Edom, or he may mean that it will be the haunt of demonic spirits.

What is this *night creature* that shall rest there?

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

- That would also explain why no one lived there

But wait, aren't all the demons confined to the abyss following the Tribulation?

That is likely the case, so the demons haunting the no-go land of Edom would then have to be fabricated by the human mind, as are superstitions. Another possibility is that not all demons are incarcerated in the Abyss...

Revelation 20:2-3 – *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.*

Maybe it is just those demons that engaged in deceiving the nations that are locked up during the Millennial Kingdom. This is supported by the fact that only the demons who mixed it up with humanity before the flood were incarcerated...

Jude 1:6 – *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*

How could a demon be female... aren't all angels holy or fallen male?

According to medieval folklore, a succubus is a demon that takes the form of a woman in order to have intercourse with a man in his dreams. The fact that this takes place in the mind show that demons can be whatever the mind imagines.

Can demons plant thoughts in our minds?

Yes...

Acts 5:3 – *Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?”*

But whether we have a thought that is from a demon or our own sin nature, we have a choice whether or not to act on it or even to continue entertaining the thought.

If demons can plant thoughts in our minds, does this mean they can read our minds?

No...

1 Kings 8:39 – *for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men*

God alone knows every human heart. There is no one else who has that ability. God knows what we will say before we can say it, while the thought is still formulating...

Psalm 139:4 – *For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.*

v15 – What else haunts the land of Edom following the Tribulation?

Snakes and hawks... predators that would make it unwelcome for song birds and little furry creatures even though it would be during the Millennial Kingdom when carnivores become herbivores.

- This is one more reasons for no-go zones during the Millennial Kingdom... places were the curse lives on.

v16 – What book did Isaiah invite people to consult?

Search from the book of the LORD, and read: This remarkable statement tells us that Isaiah understood that his words were the words of the LORD. It also means that Isaiah clearly challenged doubters to “look it up” once the prophecy was fulfilled.

- It also tells us that Isaiah meant that his prophecy should be understood literally — poetically, but literally.

What can we be sure will happen?

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).

v17 – What will be possessed forever?

The land of Israel will be possessed by the people of Israel forever... God has allocated what portions of the land of Israel would be given to which of the tribes of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48).

How would the Israelites possess the land of Israel during the Eternal State (i.e. forever)?

All who have trusted in God's provision for eternal life both Jew & Gentile will have their eternal home in the New Jerusalem. This is a promise to both Israel and the Church as spiritual descendants of Abraham...

Galatians 3:29 – *if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

How do people misinterpret Galatians 3:29 to think the church has replaced Israel in the plan of God?

They think that God is done with Israel after they rejected Jesus as the Messiah and that God's only heir is the church.

Romans 11:25 – *blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in* God is not done with Israel... God resumes working through Israel when the Church Age is complete.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- Purgatory is false doctrine... do not be deceived, this mortal life is our only opportunity to embrace Jesus
- The stage is being set for the Great Tribulation... make sure you will be among those who will escape it.
- Spiritual warfare is for real... be aware of it and use all the armor of God to stand (Ephesians 6)
- Demons can plant thoughts... so be careful what thoughts you act on.
- God keeps His promises and His prophecies will happen... trust in them and depend on His Word.