

Isaiah 34-35:1-10

"Indignation, Tribulation & Restoration"

It surfaces regularly in our studies on prophecy, this principle of *foreshadows & fulfillments*. The concept is one that we could loosely associate w/teaser trailers of coming attractions... There you are, you're at the theater & you're seeing all these previews. They're not the *fullness* of what's to come (it's not the feature film by any stretch of the imagination). But it gives you a bit of a taste, it satisfies in brief what will one day be in full.

In a similar fashion (again just for the sake of communicating the concept), it's not uncommon for Biblical prophecy to be foreshadowed in history (we're given a glimpse, or a taste), but not fulfilled completely (in the sense of its ultimate aim) until later on.

In Ch 33, God was speaking powerfully on behalf of those who belong *to* Him & how He was going to judge those who stand *against* Him. Specifically, He was speaking out against Assyria. How that He was going to plunder & deal treacherously w/them because they were plundering & dealing treacherously w/His people. (& We spoke of the law of sowing & reaping that God has ordained. **We spoke of the perfect timing of God in so often waiting until we've exhausted every resource & every recourse before He rises to deliver us so that we know, we weren't delivered by *our* might, nor by *our* power, but by the Spirit of God... To God *alone* be the glory, great things *He* has done.)**

Ch 33 Ends on quite a high note. It crescendos w/how God is going to *save* His people. How He will tend *to* & take care *of* them. How He will provide for & protect them (pointing us toward the millennial kingdom of Christ when He will rule & reign over the earth in righteousness for 1,000 yrs).

Ch 34 plunges us back into darkness & dread. That which was to be foreshadowed in Assyria will be fulfilled upon the nations of the earth. God will judge the earth in righteousness. Every nation, every tribe, every tongue & every people.

Vs 1

So, immediately our attention is drawn to what? The *universal* context & application of what's being said. – God doesn't call for 1 people, or 1 place to take heed. Look at what's being said. He uses words like, "You nations, the earth... & the world." "All that is in it, & all that comes forth from it." There are zero exceptions to this declaration, this proclamation against the nations.

But don't miss this, before God *judges* the earth, He *warns* the earth. Every nation, every tribe, tongue & people.

“Judgment is coming!” The question isn’t one of whether we’ve been warned, or not. The question is whether we will *pay attention to the warning*, or not!

Vs 2-4

Wow... I’ll cut straight to the chase here. As a general rule, (& such would be the case here), whenever you see a reference to God’s *indignation* (or wrath) in the O.T. It’s speaking of what Jesus referred to as the “*Great Tribulation*” that’s to come upon all the earth before His return.

You can write it down so you can look it up later, but it’s found in Matt 24. Jesus’ disciples were asking Him what would be taking place on the earth before He returned (what were the signs they should be looking for that signaled the end). & Many of you are no doubt familiar. He said things like, wars & rumors of wars. He said that *nation* would rise against *nation*.

(Btw, quick side note. * When Jesus said, “Nation will rise against nation” we often think along the lines of “Ukraine, Russia, China, the escalation of war among the nations” & it can certainly include that. But the word that’s used in the Greek is the word “Ethnos” from which we get our word “Ethnic”. So you might be more accurate to think along the lines of escalating racial tensions between ethnic groups. Something certainly more on the rise right now than any other time in our recent history.) *

But Jesus spoke of the love of many growing cold, the abomination which causes desolation (which involves the blasphemy of the A.C. resulting in the intense persecution of the Jews) & then He said this, “*For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*”¹

When is the last time you really took the time to consider the weight of what He just said? Think of the tribulation this world has seen throughout history. The absolute genocide exacted upon nations of people due to totalitarian dictators & people w/demented dreams of global domination. Even as recent as Nazi Germany & the obliteration & extermination of 6 million Jews being tortured, starved, thrown into mass ovens & burned alive... Mao Zedong, in seeking to create a “new socialist China” murdered between 40-80 million people through starvation, persecution, prison labor, and mass executions... But what Jesus is saying is that this world hasn’t seen anything yet... Those things will pale by comparison to the rage of the A.C. followed up by the wrath of God that will be unleashed upon this world.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 24:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Again, notice the words Isaiah uses here. “Indignation”, “fury”, “utterly destroyed”, “given over to the slaughter.” & This is what’s coming down upon *the nations*, this is universal in scope & there are none who will escape.

It’s the time of Jacob’s trouble, the great tribulation, the final 7 yr period of human history in which the wrath of God is poured out unrelentingly upon a Christ rejecting world. Cataclysmic upheavals, catastrophic disturbances in the ecology, the economy unlike anything anyone has ever known throughout human history.

If you want a sneak peek at what life will be like during this time, you might read Rev 6, Ch’s 8-9. Add to that Rev 16-18. You’ll see death & destruction unparalleled. Disasters on the earth, disasters in the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars. People being tortured by demons... When you get to Ch 19, Jn writes this. *“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’”*²

No doubt being related to this great slaughter in Vs 2-3 of Isa 34, “Their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, the mountains shall be melted w/their blood.” Millions & millions of dead bodies being strewn over the Mts & the birds of the air will feast on their rotting flesh...

God says, “Come near, *hear* what I’m telling you & *heed* what I’m telling you.” & I’m telling you the stage has never been set like it is today for the dominos to start falling that lead to this event... God calls us to pay attention. The stage is set for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (that leads to the abomination that causes desolation). The stage is set for a confederation of nations to dominate the world out of which the A.C. will rise. The stage is set for a false religion to be set in place that the Bible says will characterize the last days. The stage is set for the economic system that the Bible prophecies will be in place for the last days... On & on it goes...

Now, could God delay for another 100, 200 yrs or more? God can do whatever He wants. But know that He would have to recreate the same kind of stage that we have in the world today, because all the pieces are in place right now...

Perhaps you’re there & you’re thinking. “Man, that seems kinda harsh...”

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Re 19:17-18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

* Why would God warn people of His final judgment to come through this terrible outpouring of wrath? Why not try something a little more kind, a little more... *gracious*?" You need to know, that's what God is doing... *right now!* For some 2,000 yrs God has been pouring out His grace, pleading w/man to be reconciled to Him through the cross of J.C... But there comes a time, when if people won't respond to grace, that through sin they invoke God's righteous wrath. His Spirit won't *always* strive w/man. There comes a point when enough is enough & God will put a stop to the madness/wickedness of sin...

But God doesn't relish the thought of putting people into the "vat" where the "grapes of His wrath" will be trampled out. He'd rather see people saved. & So He waits. Peter tells us, "...*and consider that the longsuffering* (patience) *of our Lord is salvation—*"³ I wonder how many people here are grateful that God was patient w/them, waited *upon* them to come to Him rather than pour out His wrath when He would've been completely just to do so? *

& That's the last detail I want you to see in this section. It's in Vs 1. The address isn't to "My people" from the Lord. "Hear *My* people..." He doesn't say that. It's to "the nations" of the world. You need to understand that in Isaiah's mind (& in the minds of the people of Israel to this day) there are 2 kinds of people in this world. The people of God, & the nations of the world. God has His people (Jews) & then there's every other nation (Gentiles).

* The call to hear & heed isn't given to the people of God, but to the nations of the world. Why? Because God's people haven't been appointed to wrath, to indignation, but to obtain *salvation* through our Lord J.C. God has created an "escape hatch" from all this. We call it the "rapture" of the church.

Now, let's not get it twisted. As believers, we experience tough times, tribulations. But there is a marked difference between the persecution of the world & the outpouring of God's wrath upon a *Christ rejecting* world. Jesus said w/regard to this time of great tribulation, "*Watch therefore, and 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.*"⁴ & Though time forbids us from delving into it thoroughly, you should know, this is one reason we hold to a "pre-tribulation rapture position" here at CCJ. Jesus said it's coming, (the great tribulation) but you can escape it. How so? Through the rapture. (The *catching up* of the church).

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Pe 3:15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Lk 21:36]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Paul, when he wrote to the Thessalonians, explained it like this, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*⁵ & Again in Ch 5 Vs 9, *"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*⁶ ... Somebody give God praise! 😊 *

Vs 5-7

Again, cutting to the chase. The Edomites were neighbors to Israel. They were often bitter *rivals* of Israel. They were also directly *related* to Israel. Edom was Esau. Esau was Jacob's brother (God changed Jacob's name to ... Israel). But the Edomites would rejoice when Judah/Israel was afflicted... So what's happening here is that Edom becomes the example/representative of all the nations that hated the Jews.

& Again, Isaiah is leaning into this Battle of Armageddon. He's using sacrificial imagery to help you envision how blood soaked this event will be. Rev 14:20 tells us that blood will flow up to the horses bridle for about 184 miles! The reference to sacrifice also tells us that God is exacting a payment for sin... Not a perfect payment by any stretch, but a payment, nonetheless.

* Listen, here's the deal. Man will pay for his sin, one way or another. Either you can receive the payment made on your behalf through the death/resurrection of J.C. Or you can pay for it yourself. The problem w/paying for it yourself is that you can never pay in full. What happens if you have a credit card & you've racked up an insurmountable debt... Now, you make payments each month, but the debt is so high your payment is only going toward the interest & never makes a dent in the principal. Guess what, you can pay on that debt forever, but you'll never be free of what you owe, you'll never pay in full.

Now, it's kind of a crude illustration but I trust it serves the point. God demands a perfect (complete) payment to satisfy the penalty we've racked up in sin. The problem is that as sinful beings we can never make a *perfect* payment. *An imperfect person can never provide a perfect sacrifice. You can never bring perfection out of imperfection; it just doesn't work that way. This is why hell is forever. It's because you can pay & pay & pay, but your payment will never satisfy the penalty that sin has imposed... & God knew that. So what did He do about that? Out of His great love for you, He sent His only begotten Son for you.*

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Th 4:16-17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Th 5:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Perfect & w/out sin. & He placed upon Him the sin of us all. He was wounded for *our* transgressions, bruised for *our* iniquities. The *chastisement* for *our* peace was placed upon *Him* & by *His stripes* we are healed. & God says, “If you will believe upon Him, & what He’s done for you, if you’ll receive His payment on your behalf. I will credit your account w/His righteousness. Forgiven, debt paid in full, you will be saved.” That’s the gospel, the good news. Christ died for our sins, was buried & rose again the 3rd day. Believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved. *

Vs 8-10

The day of the Lord’s vengeance. Note the reminiscence of Sodom & Gomorrah (streams to pitch, dust to brimstone).

Vs 11-15

Much of the earth will be desolate, a habitation for animals. Haunts for demonic creatures.

One little section I’d draw attention to here. Vs 11, * “He shall stretch out over it the line of confusion & the stones of emptiness. He’s speaking in “building terms” measuring lines, plumb lines. This is what God will build for these people, confusion & emptiness.

When you reject the Lord, when you turn away from God, you rebel against His plan, His purpose, His design/desire for you. Do you know what you wind up with? Confusion & emptiness. – Jesus is the One who gives you meaning & purpose. Apart from Him you are w/out hope being w/out God in the world. *

Vs 16-17

Vs 16 is the confidence of the word of God. When you really commit someone to something what do you do? You say something to the effect of “put it in writing”. God says, “I’m telling you what’s going to happen. Once it’s done, go ahead & look it up & see that I’ve told you right here.” * & I love this about the word of God.

God is the only One who will verify/ratify His word by speaking of what’s to come as though it’s already passed & if it ever fails you can disregard it all. No other book, no other writing throughout all of human history will dare to do that. But God says, “I do that...” Isa 46:9-10 *For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done,*⁷ In the NT vernacular, “Heaven & earth will pass away, but My words will never, by no means pass away.” Not one word will fail, “For My mouth has commanded it...” *

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). (Is 46:9-10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Chapter 35

We'll make quick work of Ch 35. But we're so grateful that the word of God never leaves us in the dark. God will always bring us into the light, into the hope that we have in Him. It never ends in a minor key, on a dark note. When the indignation of God is through, the restoration of God will commence. "Behold, I make all things new." After the Battle of Armageddon, the millennial kingdom of Christ will be established.

Vs 1-2

The Bible tells us that creation itself, being subjected to futility through the fall, groans in birth pangs due to the corruption of the earth. But the day is coming when creation will rejoice being restored to God's original intent.

Vs 3-4

Things can get tough, knees grow feeble, hands grow weak. But again, we're to encourage one another to lead life w/a view toward eternity. To not give up, to not give in. The reality of what's to come *eternally* should influence/impact our lives *presently*.

Weak hands & feeble knees (speaking spiritually here) don't serve the Lord as they should. Don't progress in their walk w/Christ as they should... What's the command? "Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, & do not fear...'" & Not because of some vain or vague optimism, but by the confidence that God has your back, He will come & save you...

Guys, this is where we could once again segue into the current cultural quagmire that we're constantly confronted with & bombarded by. * How many believers today are afraid (fearful-hearted) to stand up & speak out against the evil that's so pervasive in our society? They might be ostracized, canceled, labelled a domestic terrorist or any # of things meant to intimidate, discriminate & get you to cower in fear.

But ladies & gentlemen I need you to hear me on this. Over & over again throughout the word of God, when His people were facing uncertainty, warfare, hostility, volatility, we find the command of God, "Be strong & of good courage." When Joshua was preparing to take the Promised Land, God spoke to him & told him, "*Be strong and of good courage,*"⁸ When David was preparing to pass from the scene & he was instructing his son (Solomon) he said "*Be strong and of good courage, ... do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God—my God—will be with you.*"⁹

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jos 1:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Ch 28:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Eph 6:10 **"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."**¹⁰ It's interesting when you get to Rev 21. & You have the listing of the people who aren't going to be in heaven, guess who tops the list... It's not murders, it's not rapists, it's not drunkards... Its... *the cowardly*. & I'm not saying you don't experience fear as a believer. Of course we do. But courage isn't the absence of fear, it's the strength to do what's right even in the face of fear.

God doesn't want us representing Him as some mild mannered, weak/spineless individual who can't handle the heat. We're to go forth in boldness, in courage, have I not *commanded you!* The world wants you to sit down, to shut up & to spinelessly acquiesce to their demands. God would have you *stand up, stand out, speak up & stand firm*. The righteous are as bold as a lion... I'm going to tell you something. Fear is contagious. Write it down, read it later, Deut 20:8... God can do more w/a handful of committed, courageous people than He can w/thousands of ½ hearted followers.

Fear will come upon us. We're to strengthen one another, encourage one another to be strong & of good courage. *

Vs 5-7

Do you remember when J.B. was placed in prison? He'd proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, was waiting on Him to establish the kingdom, but like as w/many of us... Jesus didn't do *what John wanted, when John wanted it, the way John wanted it done...* So John sent to Him, "Are you the Messiah or should we be looking for another?"

Jesus began to heal the lame, open the eyes of the blind, open the ears of the deaf... Then He told John's disciples, "Go & tell John what you've seen. Blind eyes open, lame leaping for joy, the deaf hearing & the dead are raised up & the poor have the gospel preached to them..." He was alluding to this section of scripture, showing John that He was in fact the Messiah & that this was just a "teaser trailer" to the coming attraction of His kingdom in its fullness.

Vs 8-10

A Highway of Holiness. How glorious is that? The greatest engineering feat ever accomplished. Charles Spurgeon said this, "Engineering has done much to tunnel mountains, and bridge abysses; but the greatest triumph of engineering is that which made a way from sin to holiness, from death to life, from condemnation to perfection.

¹⁰ [The New King James Version](#), (1982). [Eph 6:10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Who could make a road over the mountains of our iniquities but Almighty God? None but the Lord of love would have wished it; none but the God of wisdom could have devised it; none but the God of power could have carried it out.”

& It's not for everyone, it's the way of holiness, not worldliness. * I posted something a little over a week ago about the DEI office at Chick-fil-a & someone responded. “Just so you know, there are people that exist outside of the *Narrow* minded, outdated & fearful way that you choose to perceive this world. & We are thriving.” All I could think was the words of Jesus when He said, *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*¹¹ *

I don't know about you, but I'm so glad that the promise is given, “Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.” I need those guard rails up & in full strength while I'm seeking to grow in wisdom & maturity in the Lord. I think a N.T. application we could draw from is this, * “He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it until the Day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:6) *God is faithful. He doesn't start projects He has no intention of finishing. So if God has begun a good work in you, He's going to be faithful to complete it. (How many of you are bold enough to say, “God has begun a good work in me. He's saved Me. He's poured out His Spirit of grace & mercy upon Me. He's forgiven me & made me new.”)? Then take heart.* There are bumps, bruises, failings & fallings short along the way, the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. But God is faithful. He shall see you through, sorrow & sighing will flee away... You (the ransomed, the redeemed) will come to Zion w/singing, w/everlasting joy upon your head... *

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your word. Strengthen weak hands, make firm, feeble knees. Help us to stand up, to stand out & to be salt & light in this crazy, chaotic world to which You've called us. May Your joy be our strength.

God has so loved you that Christ has died for you. Judgment is coming, grace is available. You can surrender to Jesus, right here, right now & be saved.

¹¹ *The New King James Version*, (1982). [Mt 7:13-14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.