

Session 12 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 34-35

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Isaiah 34-35 describes God's end-time global judgment of all the nations that oppose Him and the salvation of His people in context to the Great Tribulation and the return of Jesus to rule the earth in the Millennium. Isaiah 34-35 develop and conclude the themes of judgment and salvation seen in Isaiah 28-33. God's global judgments (Isa. 34) express His zeal to fill the earth with love (Isa. 35).
- B. Outline for Isaiah 34-35
- 34:1-17 God's end-time judgment on the nations
 - 34:1 All nations commanded to listen to God's end-time message
 - 34:2-4 All nations who oppose the Lord will be judged
 - 34:5-7 God's end-time judgment against Edom
 - 34:8-10 The day-of-the-Lord vengeance on Edom
 - 34:11-15 Edom will be totally desolate of human life
 - 34:16-17 The Lord's judgment against Edom is recorded
 - 35:1-10 God's glory and salvation
 - 35:1-2 The transformation of nature
 - 35:3-4 A call to strengthen God's people
 - 35:5-7 Healing and restoration of the people and land
 - 35:8-10 The highway to Jerusalem

II. END-TIME CONTEXT: JESUS WILL REPLACE THE EVIL LEADERSHIP OF THE EARTH

- A. God will draw the wicked leaders to the battle of Jerusalem to defeat them before the eyes of the whole world (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Zeph. 3:8; cf. Ezek. 38:4). God's end-time plan will result in purifying the Church, winning the harvest, saving Israel, and replacing evil governments.
- ²*I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken... (Zech. 14:2)*
- ⁸*My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them...all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. (Zeph. 3:8)*
- B. Satan will send demons to gather the kings of the earth to the battle of Jerusalem (Rev. 16:13).
- ¹⁴*...Demons performing signs...go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle...¹⁶*to the place called...Armageddon. (Rev. 16:14-16)**
- C. Jesus will replace the evil leadership of the earth in one hour, in order to establish a new world order, cleanse the earth, and inaugurate the millennial kingdom.
- ¹⁹*The kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered to make war against Him [Jesus]...*
- ²⁰*The beast [Antichrist] was captured...²¹*The rest [the kings] were killed with the sword... (Rev. 19:19-21)**

- D. David saw Messiah killing the kings of the earth who resisted God in the end times.
⁵The Lord...shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. ⁶He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies; He shall execute the heads of many countries.
(Ps. 110:5-6)
- E. Never in history have all the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to one place. They will be drawn to Armageddon by *the Lord* (Joel 3:2, 12; Zech. 12:3; 14:2; Zeph. 3:8; cf. Ezek. 38:4), by *Satan* (Rev. 16:13-14; 19:19), and by their own *evil motives* (Ezek. 35:11). It is God's *winepress of wrath* as Jesus will trample these armies like grapes (Isa. 63:2-4; Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:19-20; 19:15).
³I have trodden the winepress...I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. ⁴For the day of vengeance is in My heart...⁶I have trodden down the peoples [nations]... *(Isa. 63:3-6)*
- F. God's end-time *winepress of wrath* will result in blood flowing for 1,600 furlongs (about 185 miles) which will cover the entire length of Israel—from Bozrah to Meggido is 130 miles.
²⁰And the winepress was trampled outside the city [Jerusalem], and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for 1,600 furlongs [185 miles]. *(Rev. 14:20)*
²²...I will rain down on him [Antichrist], on his troops...with flooding rain... *(Ezek. 38:22)*

III. GOD'S END-TIME JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (ISA. 34:1-17)

- A. All nations are commanded to listen to God's end-time message (34:1). Isaiah exhorted people to be strengthened by the knowledge of God's plan related to the coming judgment and salvation (33:6).
¹Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. *(Isa. 34:1)*
- B. All nations who oppose the Lord will be judged (34:2-4).
²For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them; He has given them over to the slaughter. ³Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. ⁴All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down...as fruit falling from a fig tree. *(Isa. 34:2-4)*
1. ***Indignation of the Lord:*** The anger of the LORD will be against all nations and their armies in the end times because all nations will gather to make war against Him and Jerusalem.
 2. ***Stench shall arise:*** The odor will come from the rotting flesh of unburied corpses (34:3).
²⁰“But I will remove far from you [Jerusalem] the northern army [the Antichrist's armies] and will drive him away into a barren and desolate land...His stench will come up, and his foul odor will rise, because he has done monstrous things.” *(Joel 2:20)*
¹²For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them...¹⁴They will set apart men regularly employed...to bury those bodies remaining on the ground... *(Ezek. 39:12-14)*

3. **All the host of heaven:** The heavenly host shall be dissolved, and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall as a leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree. The power of God will impact the heavens and the hosts living there (34:4; cf. 13:10; 24:21).
- ¹²...**He opened the sixth seal...**¹³**And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs...**¹⁴**Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up...**¹⁵**And the kings of the earth, the great men...the commanders...hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,**¹⁶**and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from... the wrath of the Lamb!”**¹⁷**For the great day of His wrath has come...** (Rev. 6:12-17)
- a. **Stars:** The stars may speak of asteroids and meteor showers hitting the earth. The Greek word for stars used here is *aster* from which we get the word asteroid. An *aster* refers to any shining mass in the sky, including stars, meteors, asteroids, or any flaming debris, etc. Stars are still in the sky in the fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12).
- ²⁵**There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars...**²⁶**men’s hearts failing them from fear...for the powers of heaven will be shaken.** (Lk. 21:25-26)
- b. **Hosts:** These may refer to meteors etc. or demonic hosts in heavenly places or both.
- ²¹...**in that day that the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.** ²²**They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered...and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished.** (Isa. 24:21-22)
- C. God’s end-time judgment against Edom (34:5-7): Ancient Edom is in the geographic area of modern-day Jordan. Many see Edom also as a representative example of the judgment that will fall on all nations that stand against the Lord in the end times.
- ⁵**“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment.”** ⁶**The sword of the LORD is filled with blood; it is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.** ⁷**The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness.** (Isa. 34:5-7)
1. **Edom:** Amos referred to Edom’s history and perpetual anger toward Israel (Gen. 33:4-16; Num. 20:14-21; 24:18; 1 Sam. 14:47; 1 Kgs. 11:1-25; 2 Kgs. 8:20; 14:7-10; Ps. 60:1; 83:7; 137:7; Isa. 34:5-7; 63:1-6; Jer. 49:7-22; Ezek. 35:1-15; Amos 1:11; Obad. 10-14; Mal. 1:2-5).
- ¹¹“...**I will not turn away its [Edom’s] punishment, because he pursued his brother [Israel] ...and cast off all pity; his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever.**” (Amos 1:11)
2. Some of the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (Jordan) will escape the Antichrist’s rage.
- ⁴¹**He [Antichrist] shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.** (Dan. 11:41)

3. **In heaven:** The end-time global conflict starts in heaven (Rev. 12:7-9) and comes to Edom.
⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon.⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹...Satan who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev. 12:7-9)
 4. **Overflowing with blood:** Isaiah described a bloody picture of sacrificing animals to the Lord.
 5. **Bozrah:** The ancient capital of Edom is often identified with modern Buseirah, about 25 miles southeast of the Dead Sea.
- D. The day-of-the-Lord vengeance on Edom (34:8-10): It has an eternal dimension to it.
- ⁸For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion. ⁹Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever. (Isa. 34:8-10)*
1. **The cause of Zion:** One reason for this judgment is to repay those who persecuted Israel.
 2. **Pitch and brimstone:** The destruction of Edom is compared to Sodom's fate (Gen. 19:24-28). Edom will be a testimony to the nations for 1,000 years of the coming lake of fire. This area is named the "Territory of Wickedness" and seems to be connected with the lake of fire. Ancient Edom was close to where Sodom was.
⁹...If anyone worships the beast...¹⁰he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night... (Rev. 14:9-11)
 3. They will suffer in the presence of the Lamb—whose physical throne will be in Jerusalem.
⁴...they [Edom] shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever. (Mal. 1:4)
 4. In the Millennium, those going to Jerusalem to worship will look on corpses (Isa. 66:23).
²³"And it shall come to pass that...all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. ²⁴"And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:23-24)
 5. It is significant that Edom and Babylon are described with a similar judgment comparable to Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone coming from heaven (Gen. 19:24, 28; cf. Jer. 49:17–18; Isa. 34:9; Jer. 50:40; Isa. 13:19), that burns with smoke arising forever (Rev. 19:3; cf. Isa. 34:10) and resulting in such destruction that humans cannot live there (Jer. 49:13, 18, 20; 50:9-40; cf. Isa. 13:20; 34:10; Ezek. 35:9, 14–15; Mal. 1:3–4) but only creatures of the desert (Isa. 13:20-22; 34:11-15). The two regions may share the same boundary line instead of being two areas that are described as perpetually burning.

- E. Edom will be totally desolate of human life (34:11-15). It will be inhabited by desert creatures.
*¹¹But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it...
¹³It shall be a habitation of jackals, a courtyard for ostriches. ¹⁴The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals...also the night creature shall rest there. (Isa. 34:11-14)*
- F. The Lord's judgment against Edom is to be searched out (34:16-17). Isaiah urged his readers to examine the details of this prophecy to verify its accuracy when it is fulfilled in the future.
¹⁶Search from the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these shall fail... (Isa. 34:16)

IV. GOD'S GLORY AND SALVATION (ISA. 35:1-10)

- A. The Lord's zeal to remove wicked from the earth was to establish a community of joy in Isaiah 35.
- A. The transformation of nature (35:1-2).
¹The wilderness...the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; ²it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God. (Isa. 35:1-2)
1. **Desert:** This speaks of the dry, dead desert south of the Dead Sea. It is extremely hot and dry and is unable to sustain much life. The beauty for which Lebanon and Carmel were famous will be seen in this desert. This is totally opposite of what the Lord will do in Edom.
 2. **They:** This is a reference to the "redeemed" who are later identified in 35:9-10.
 3. **See God's glory:** They shall encounter many different manifestations of God's glory.
*³..."Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God...
⁵The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together..." (Isa. 40:3-5)*
 4. **With joy and singing:** The redeemed will sing over the desert both before and after it blooms.
- B. A call to strengthen God's people (35:4-5): The Lord's messengers are those who are not overcome with fear in the end times—they are to encourage the fearful with God's end-time promises.
³Strengthen the weak hands...⁴Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense [reward] of God..." (Isa. 35:3-4)
- ⁹O Zion...get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength...be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah... ¹⁰"Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand...behold, His reward is with Him." (Isa. 40:9-10)*
- C. Many will be fearful (Lk. 21:26). They will need strength from hearing promises from God's word.
²⁶...men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming... (Lk. 21:26)

- D. The Lord will release healing and restoration of the people and land (35:5-7). Isaiah elaborates on ways in which God's glory will be manifest— physically healing people and transforming agriculture. The Lord's plans include releasing power in every aspect of human life and creation.

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. ⁷The parched ground shall become a pool... (Isa. 35:5-7)

- E. The Lord will cause a highway to Jerusalem to be built (35:8-10).

⁸A highway shall be there ...and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness...⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it...but the redeemed shall walk there, ¹⁰and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. 35:8-10)

1. **Highway:** A special highway or road will be built to facilitate bringing the Jewish captives back to Israel (Isa. 19:23; 35:8; 49:11; 62:10) and serving those on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The prophecy of a highway is unique to Isaiah (Isa. 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 57:14; 62:10).
2. **Return:** People who once lived in Jerusalem will return to Zion (Jerusalem). In the seventh bowl, an earthquake and 100-pound hailstones will destroy many highways (Rev. 16:18-21).
²For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken... half of the city shall go into captivity...³Then the LORD will...fight against those nations... (Zech. 14:2-3)
3. This highway may serve different purposes such as facilitating the remnant returning to Israel and Gentiles coming to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16-19).
4. The highway will start in Egypt and will serve as a strategic connection from Egypt to Assyria so they both can serve the Lord and His purposes in Jerusalem in an effective way.
²³In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. (Isa. 19:23)
5. **Highway of Holiness:** Only the redeemed people will travel on this highway. The nations that would make a pilgrimage to Zion were introduced in 2:2-4.
²...and all nations shall flow to it [Jerusalem]. ³Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to...the house of the God of Jacob..." (Isa. 2:2-3)
6. **Lions:** No lions or dangerous animals will be there to threaten one's safety.
7. **Gladness:** The result of God's salvation is a people forever filled with gladness and joy.
⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4)