

acting to claim at last the honour that is due to him as creator and ruler of the world” (Webb 1996: 143-44).

vv6-7 “Thus in a real sense, all sin must end in a sacrifice, either of the sinner or of one in place of the sinner. It is this truth which Isa. 53 comprehends. The salvation which is proclaimed and promised in chs. 49-52 is only possible because Another has been sacrificed. The tragedy of an Edom, then, is that its sacrifice is unnecessary. If the nations of the world would learn the ways of God (2:1-4), they would learn that he has already offered the sacrifice whereby they could be forgiven” (Oswalt 1986: 612).

“Calvin notes aptly that the intensity of the language is used to produce an impression upon human hearts which are so hardened that plain language leaves them unmoved” (Oswalt 1986: 614).

“Try as we will, there is no escaping the Bible’s teaching on the fate of those who persist in their rebellion against God. Their fate is fixed by God’s determined purpose; it is written in his book, and *his mouth* has already *given the order* (16). Isaiah never shrinks from his responsibility to set this terrible truth before us. The very last verse of the book returns us to it again, for we need it to spur us into action. In the last analysis, Isaiah’s vision is a missionary vision, and every great missionary movement has derived its urgency from this truth: the world is in rebellion against God, and without the gospel people will be lost, utterly and eternally” (Webb 1996: 144).

“How do we know whether we are trusting the creature or not? Most of us are not in a position to affect national policy about alliances, so what do all these admonitions have to do with us? . . . To trust the nations is to trust the glory of humanity. What are our churches trusting in? Large budgets, impressive plant, powerful preaching? If so, we have put our trust in the creature. The place given to prayer in a local congregation is a good measure of where a church’s trust really is. If its only focused praying is the Sunday morning pastoral prayer, that congregation is headed into the desert. Whatever they may say, they as a church are trusting the creature” (Oswalt 2003: 389-90).

SOURCES CITED

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ISAIAH 34: THE FINAL JUDGMENT

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 1-35

- I. Judah’s sin requires exile, but a remnant will return (1:1-12:6)
- II. The nations will be judged, and therefore they should not be trusted (13:1-23:18)
- III. The Lord will rule over the earth and redeem his people (24:1-27:13)
- IV. **The Holy One of Israel will replace faithless rulers with a righteous king (28:1-35:10)**
 - A. The Lord condemns the leaders of Israel and Judah (28:1-29:24)
 - B. The Lord condemns those who trust in Egypt (30:1-31:9)
 - C. The Lord will rule in righteousness (32:1-33:24)
 - D. **The Lord will destroy the nations and restore Zion (34:1-35:10)**

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 34

- I. God’s Destruction of the Nations (34:1-4)
- II. God’s Sacrifice in Edom (34:5-7)
- III. God’s Destruction of the Land of Edom (34:8-15)
- IV. God’s Redistribution of the Land of Edom (34:16-17)

MAJOR IDEAS

1. Destruction is decreed on the entire earth because the nations (1) are enemies of Israel and (2) must atone for their own sin.
2. Edom is representative of all nations that are aligned against Israel. Ever since God promised Abraham that those who curse you I will curse (Gen 12:3), to be against Israel is to be against God. Edom was against Israel from first to last, from Israel's entry into the Promised Land (Num 20:14-21) to the destruction of Jerusalem (Ps 137:7).
3. Judgment against the nations is necessary for salvation for Israel. Note in this regard the following chapter (35) which describes the transformation of the land and the return of the exiles. Note too what the Servant said (partly quoted by Jesus): "the Lord has anointed me . . . to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion" (61:1-3).
4. The imagery of the destruction of the wicked by fire (34:9-10) is predicted many times in Scripture, including Isaiah 1:31; 66:24; Jer 7:20; Ezek 20:47-48; Dan 7:10-11; Mal 4:1; Matt 3:12; 13:30-40; Mark 9:43-48; Heb 10:27; Jude 7; Rev 14:10-11. The destruction of the earth is described in Isa 24:1-6; Luke 17:29-30; 2 Pet 3:7-12; Rev 16:8-9; 18:17-18.
5. Chapter 34 is closely related to chapters 13 and 24.
6. Chapters 34-35 are two parts of one grand conclusion to the first part of the book (Isa 1-35). In particular, ch. 34 sums up the judgment against the nations described in great detail in chs. 13-23. Ch. 35 describes the results of that judgment: a new creation, the restoration of the remnant of Israel, and the reversal of the curse.
7. Application: Chapter 34 invites the nations to uphold Israel's cause and repent of their sin. Chapter 35 encourages the faithful to keep trusting God and waiting in patience for deliverance.

NOTES

"Judgment is not a comfortable subject. Even the Lord himself finds it 'strange' and 'alien' (28:21). But it is an indispensable part of the Bible's teaching about the last things. And the reason is obvious, if we quiet our feelings long enough to give it careful thought. Judgment is the natural corollary of the fact that God is king (chapter 33). A king must rule, or he is no king at all, and that means that rebellion must finally be put down. The fact is that God is almost unbelievably patient, but Isaiah is clear that his just anger is a reality to be reckoned with, and we delude ourselves if we think otherwise. Hence the urgent call to listen in verse 1. God has put the world on notice that he will not tolerate insurrection for ever" (Webb 1996: 142).

"God's wrath is expressed every day in a thousand ways. Every morning's newspaper provides more tragic evidence of the terrible price that the world is even now paying for its rejection of God. But this is nothing compared to what is to come; it is like the tremors that precede an earthquake" (Webb 1996: 142).

"To trust in this world is to reduce oneself and the world to desolation (ch. 34). On the other hand, to trust God is to place oneself in a garden of abundance, blessings, and holiness (ch. 35)" (Oswalt 1986: 607).

v4 "These heavenly "hosts" (NIV "stars") could refer to (a) the physical stars and planets that will become dim; (b) the destruction of the pagan gods that were represented by these heavenly hosts; (c) an army of heavenly beings; or possibly (d) all of the above factors are included in one holistic view of the celestial world" (Smith 2007: 572n280).

"Why should Edom be used in this way? The answer is that throughout the OT, from Genesis (25:23) to Malachi (1:2-3), Edom is treated as the antithesis to Israel. More so even than the Amalekites, Edom is noted for attempting to block what God was doing for the world in his self-revelation to Israel (Num. 20:14-21). Thus Edom was typical of those nations which insisted upon their own ways in opposition to those of God. Thus Isaiah says, 'You can choose Edom's way or God's way, but these are the results'" (Oswalt 1986: 610).

"It is not just God acting to vindicate a particular group of people. Sacrifice is about recognizing who God himself is and giving him his due. Judgment is not just a judicial or military act; it is a religious act. It is God