

an essay:

ISAIAH 34 - THE DAY OF THE LORD'S VENGEANCE

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I. A PROPOSITION

Flee therefore, o man, from your cities of sin unto The King of The Universe, to The Cross of The Saviour, to the arms of our Lord JESUS CHRIST!

II. THE TEXT - ISAIAH 34:8-13

8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

11 But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. ¹

III. THE MESSAGE

ISAIAH 34 is rich in “extreme language.” Biblical prophesy often uses such “extreme language” to get our attention because the issues at stake are monumental: our earthly lives and eternal salvation, both of which are of great importance to GOD Who created and loves all men. But His heart is especially set upon His saints whom He has elected for His purposes. So while The LORD grieves over the heart of sinful men, that they should destroy themselves in their sins by rebelling against His Laws and forfeit their everlasting souls, He is most especially concerned for those who are called by His Name and who have been sealed in Covenant with Him by His Grace! And it is part of GOD’s Glory in that His justice must punish wickedness. The price must be paid for sin. No nation or soul of man is exempt, either heathen or saint!

In ISAIAH 34 we first read of GOD’s justice coming upon Idumea, the land of Edom and the descendants of Esau. These were men whom GOD allowed to afflict

¹ KJV, ISAIAH 34:8-13.

ancient Israel for a time and rejoiced in doing so. If GOD's justice, which must be righteous, judges and chastises His own Covenant people, His justice must also judge the heathens – even when by His Providence He uses them to correct and punish His saints. Though ISAIAH 34 speaks only of Divine judgement coming upon this one heathen nation of Edom, it is a picture of the fate of all bent men and nations in all times and places that oppose GOD's Kingdom on earth and give abominable affront to GOD's Kingdom in Heaven! It is too a picture of the utter destruction of Divine judgement which even ancient Israel and GOD's saints in all times and places must also fear: we who are saved by His Grace are not therefore exempt in this world!

So ISAIAH 34 brings us to His controversy with both Zion and the heathen nations that have oppressed Zion. Isaiah foresees the terrible “Day of The LORD's Vengeance” and sees that it is as a consuming fire as that which fell upon sinful Sodom and Gomorrah! [ISAIAH 34:8]² Those ancient cities were so perverse, afflicted GOD's people so deeply, rebelled against GOD's Laws so thoroughly and lacked so few righteous men that eventually the longsuffering of The Almighty came to an end. In its place came the all consuming destruction of fire and brimstone in righteous Divine judgement.

Here Isaiah prophesies that GOD's righteous justice can not and will not spare Israel from such a horrific fate! No matter that the people cry out, “The Temple of The LORD, The Temple of The LORD!” No matter that they soothe their itching ears with words of the false prophets who condone sin and apostasy, “We have Abraham and Moses as our fathers! We have The Law of GOD! We have The Torah!” No less today in our own time, though men cry out, “See our great wealth and power! GOD has always blessed us and always will!” Or to the same twisted tune, “See our idols emblazoned with ‘In GOD We Trust!’” Or again, “See, O LORD, our multitude of Churches throughout our nation, which we fill – not so much on a faithfully regular basis – but in times when we are afraid and afflicted!”

² KJV, ISAIAH 34:8.

So GOD directs Isaiah to record this extreme language of coming judgement to shake these complacent sinners out of their sleep! Perhaps GOD's longsuffering might then continue. Perhaps even GOD might repent of the judgement He would otherwise bring. And even if not, there is still the duty of GOD's people to obey His Word and keep The Covenant which He has marked them with! There are still individual lives to be delivered from needless suffering, pain, disease and death! There are still individual souls to be secured by His Amazing Grace!

So does Isaiah cry out in ISAIAH 34 , "Awake, o sinners, and turn from your wickedness!" Do not doubt that GOD shall recompense all nations of men for their rebellion against Him! Your joyful streamers of arrogance shall "be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone!" All the works of your hands in which you trust for safety and deliverance shall be "shall become burning pitch!" [ISAIAH 34:9] ³ The Creator's vengeance upon Law breakers stands in eternity as testimony to His righteousness and glory: "It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever!" [ISAIAH 34:10] ⁴ Isaiah further cries out in ISAIAH 34 that wild beasts always eventually come to make the fallen glory of men's works - "the stones of emptiness" – their dwelling place. [ISAIAH 34:11] ⁵ The nation of abominators in their day of distress "shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing!" [ISAIAH 34:12] ⁶ For even the grand palaces of power of the leaders of such people shall be overtaken with thorns and brambles, becoming "...an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls!" [ISAIAH 34:13] ⁷

IV. IN CONCLUSION

Do the hearts of the wicked and wayward faint at reading such "extreme language" from The very mouth of GOD against sinners? That is the intent! Do the souls of the apostate and idolater shudder to its foundations at the reading of such "extreme language" from The very hand of The Almighty? Then perhaps there is still hope for their

³ KJV, ISAIAH 34:9.

⁴ KJV, ISAIAH 34:10.

⁵ KJV, ISAIAH 34:11.

⁶ KJV, ISAIAH 34:12.

repentance and salvation! Do the knees of the blasphemer and bent quake and turn to water at the seeing of imminent coming of “The Day of The LORD’S Vengeance?” Though the nation may be lost, the lives and souls of those who will yet turn back to The LORD may yet be delivered and secured!

For Isaiah declares in ISAIAH 33:22, “For The LORD is our judge, The LORD is our lawgiver, The LORD is our king; He will save us!”⁸ Therefore Saint Peter declared, in the power of The Holy Ghost to the men of Israel in ACTS 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name [but JESUS CHRIST] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!”⁹ Flee therefore, o man, from your cities of sin unto The King of The Universe, to The Cross of The Saviour, to the arms of our Lord JESUS CHRIST! In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, AMEN!

⁷ KJV, ISAIAH 34:13.

⁸ KJV, ISAIAH 33:22.

VI. REFERENCES

“King James Version [Bible].” Bible Works 6 [computer program]. Bible Works.
Norfolk, Virginia. 1992-2003.

⁹ KJV, ACTS 4:12.