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Isaiah 34 - 35



Isaiah - Steve Gregg

Isaiah 34-35 covers the desert and wilderness motif seen previously in the book. The chapter provides a challenge in dealing with its imagery of the earth hearing with the sword and turning pitch. While some parts share cosmic imagery with Revelation, the message seems to talk about the destruction of Edom and the establishment of the messianic kingdom. The spiritual wilderness occurs after Jerusalem's imminent destruction, with Isaiah 35 referring to a realization of messianic hope, where God chooses the weak and foolish things to conquer.

Transcript

In this session I hope to cover chapters 34 and 35. That's not a very ambitious goal. That's two chapters only, and they're not extremely long ones.

In fact, chapter 35 is quite short. On the other hand, chapter 35 is one of those chapters about the kingdom of the Messiah, which is quoted and alluded to in the New Testament a number of times. And chapter 34 is also quoted and alluded to in the New Testament.

So both of these chapters will have us looking into the New Testament to try to gather some understanding of what they are about. Chapter 34 is, frankly, very difficult to know what to say about, because on the one hand it begins as if it is a judgment on all the people of the world, all the nations. But then when it gets down to it in verse 5, it really says it's about Edom.

Now if it's really a judgment on all the nations of the world, this would be eschatological, end times kind of stuff, and there are people who have understood it that way. There are references, after all, in verse 4 to the host of heaven being dissolved and the heavens being rolled up like a scroll. And therefore it sounds certainly like the end of the universe, not just the end of the world.

And yet when we talk about Edom, we're talking about a nation that has been extinct for over 2,000 years. When the end of the world will come, Edom will not be around to be judged. They have been gone.

They were judged long ago in the second century B.C. And so that's what makes it a little difficult to know quite what to do with it. Furthermore, some of the language of judgment that is applied apparently to Edom comes up in the book of Revelation, in the judgment passages there. And so to know exactly how it is that this language is being transferred from Isaiah 34 to the book of Revelation is a challenge as well.

Now, having said that, we will see that at the end of chapter 34 we have this desert, this wilderness motif that we've seen previously. And in the beginning of chapter 35 it transitions into the blossoming of the desert again, which is a motif we've seen lots of times. Isaiah uses it a lot.

And generally speaking, of course, the idea of the desert or the wilderness blossoming is connected to the larger picture of fruitfulness in Isaiah, that God is seeking fruit from his people, the fruit he seeks is justice and righteousness. And he gave Israel the opportunity to bear that fruit, and in chapter 5 they did not bear that fruit properly. And he said he's going to therefore remove the hedge from the vineyard and let the pigs and wild animals come and trample it down, and it's going to turn into a wilderness.

So this idea that he cultivated potentially fruitful piece of ground is going to be given over to the wilds, and it will be unfruitful, and it will be a place of briars and thorns and a wilderness. We've seen that before. That has been a reference to God basically giving Israel over to their enemies because they just haven't produced what they're supposed to produce.

And the parable in Isaiah 5 is very much like, though not identical to, Jesus' parable in Matthew 21 about the vineyard. And there too the fruit was not produced, that is, it was not given to the owner. And in the case of Jesus' parable, it was not so much that the vine didn't produce good grapes, but that the tenants of the vineyard didn't turn them over to the owner.

And they even killed his messengers and even his son, and therefore he sent his judgment upon them. He utterly destroyed those miserable men and gave his vineyard to, or he gave the kingdom to another people who would bring forth the fruits of it. Now, there's no ambiguity there.

It's obvious that Jesus is using this vineyard parable to speak of the abandonment of Israel as God's vineyard and giving it over to somebody else, a nation who will bring forth the fruits of it. When you bring this into harmony with the rest of the New Testament teaching, it's obvious that this is saying that the nation of Israel has had its chance to bear fruit. It will no longer bear fruit.

God has now chosen to use a new Israel or a new vineyard. And he's given his kingdom to someone else, he said. The kingdom of God will be taken from you, he said, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it.

This is a transition to, of course, the community of Christ, the body of Christ, which we call the church. Now, this transition then from Israel to the church, becoming the fruitful ones, is buffered by this wilderness motif. Israel was the cultivated land.

Under judgment, it goes to wilderness. But then through the spirit of God being poured out in the wilderness, the wilderness blossoms and buds. The wilderness would be representative, no doubt, of the Gentile world, which had previously never produced any fruit for God.

And similarly, when we talked about fruit in terms of childbearing, Isaiah 54 talks about the Gentile world as that barren woman who had never born any child. But more will be the children of the barren than of the married wife. Again, the same idea, shifting the fruit-bearing metaphor from an agricultural one to a reproductive one.

But the point is that the Gentiles are the fruitless ones, or had been. But now Israel has become fruitless, and the Gentile world becomes fruitful and bears more children than the married wife ever did, than Israel ever did. This is a recurring cycle, a recurring theme.

Now, what we have in chapter 35 at the beginning is this desert begins to blossom, and then you have a passage which in every verse is seen to be a Messianic kingdom age, which of course corresponds with the age we live in. Now, when we see that of chapter 35, it raises questions about what chapter 34 is about. Because if you take the two together, you have that common theme, the beginning judgment of one order and the beginning of a new order that comes out of it.

In previous studies, we've seen this cycle as representing the judgment on the Old Testament order and the establishment of the New Testament order. However, here, the judgment does not appear to be on Jerusalem or on Jews at all. In chapter 34, which is the judgment chapter, followed by the kingdom chapter in chapter 35, as I've said, it looks like it's all nations or particularly Edom.

Now, it may be that Edom is given as an example of all nations. If so, then this judgment is hard to locate as that upon Israel alone. And this is something that I said provides a challenge in dealing with chapter 34.

Chapter 35, no challenges at all. It's typical. It's a typical kingdom age messianic passage.

We have New Testament allusions to it and quotes from it, which make it very clear that it is seen by the apostles as the church age. Chapter 34, which of course moves into that, where we would really kind of expect it to be like chapters 24 and 25. You might remember 24 is that chapter where many scholars take it to be the end of the world because it's apocalyptic.

There are tickets called the Isaiah's Apocalypse. And it looks like the end of the world because it says earth, earth, earth so much. But I shared that I believe if we translate it land, land, land, instead we see the judgment is not at the end of the world, but the end of the land, the end of Israel's history.

And that was chapter 24. And the following three chapters are very clearly messianic age passages. So this transition from 34 to 35 is very much like that in 24 transitioning to 25.

The difference being it's very easy to make many cross references from chapter 24 to other things that make it clear that is talking about the judgment on Israel. Less so here, considerably less so here. And so I'm going to read chapter 34 and I'll point out the things I consider to be challenging.

And then I'll maybe try to suggest some possible solutions. But they will be only possible solutions. It may be that the true solution lies elsewhere.

Chapter 34, verse 1. He has given them over to the slaughter. Also, their slain shall be thrown out. Their stench shall rise from their corpses.

And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved. And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll.

All their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine. And as fruit falling from a fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven.

Indeed, it shall come down on Edom. And on the people of my curse for judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood.

It is made overflowing with fatness. And with the blood of lambs and goats. With the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For the Lord has a sacrifice in Basra. And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. 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.

For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance. The year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Its streams shall be turned into pitch.

Its dust into brimstone. Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day.

Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste. No one will pass through it forever and ever.

But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it. Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. And he shall stretch over it the line of confusion.

And stones of emptiness. They shall call its nobles to the kingdom. But none shall be there.

And all its princes shall be nothing. The thorns shall come up in its palaces. Nettles and brambles in its fortresses.

It shall be a habitation of jackals. A courtyard for ostriches. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals.

And the wild goat shall bleat for its companion. Also the night creature shall rest there. And find for herself a place of rest.

There the arrow snake shall make her nest. And lay eggs and hatch and gather them under the shadow. There shall also be.

I'm sorry. There also shall the hawks be gathered. Every one with her mate.

Search from the book of the Lord and read. Not one of these shall fail. Not one shall lack her mate.

For my mouth has commanded it. And his spirit has gathered them. He has cast the lot for them.

And his hand has divided it among them with a measuring line. They shall possess it forever from generation to generation. They shall dwell in it.

And it doesn't stop here. The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them. And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose.

It 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.

Strengthen the weak hands and make them firm. Make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful hearted.

Be strong. Do not fear. Behold, your God will come with vengeance.

With the recompense of God, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then the lame shall leap like a deer. And the tongue of the dumb shall sing. For water

shall burst forth in the wilderness.

And streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool. And the thirsty land springs of water.

In the habitation of jackals where each lay. There shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there and a road.

And it shall be called the highway of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. But it shall be for others whoever walks the road.

Although a fool shall not go astray. No lion shall be there. Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it.

It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there. And 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. Now, of course, once we got into the material in chapter 35. We probably felt like we were in rather familiar territory.

Almost all the imagery has been studied separately. In earlier lectures and encountered in a lot of different passages of the same sort. There can be little doubt that the chapter 35 is on the same subject.

As all the other kingdom passages we saw. And we shall find that the New Testament writers interpreted chapter 35. The same way they did other kingdom passages.

But as you can see. We got a bit of a bugaboo here with chapter 34. You expect if there were no place names given in chapter 34.

We just assume this is of course Jerusalem. The old order being judged. It's that typical thing.

There's judgment. There's wilderness. It blossoms.

And the spirit is poured out. And there's a new order of things. But the problem with Isaiah 34 is the reference to place names.

Not least of which. It sounds like he's talking about all the nations of the world. In verse 2. Chapter 34 verse 2. It says for the indignation of the Lord is against all nations.

His fury against all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them. He has given them over to the slaughter.

Now I will say this. If on other grounds we felt this was focusing on the destruction of the old order in Jerusalem. Even this line would not be too terribly troubling.

Because he could be saying well of course God judges the pagan nations. But he actually will judge all nations. Including Judah.

That is to say the Jews normally would be considered an exception. Not included in the way God treats all the nations. And in saying the Lord has an issue with all the nations.

He's going to judge all the nations. It could be saying not just the pagan nations. But all the nations.

Including Israel. Including Judah. And therefore it could be a way of saying.

Listen we have already talked earlier about all the different nations that God is going to judge. But there are still some that are included in the all. Like Judah has to be considered here.

So I mean the reference to all the nations isn't the killer here. And of course in verses 3 and 4. But especially 4. I mean chapter 3 verse 3. It says the slain shall be thrown out. The stench shall rise from their corpses.

The mountains shall be melted with their blood. Literally the mountains will not melt. But it's no doubt saying they're so saturated.

With so much blood has been shed. The blood super saturates the mountains. And you know what happens to soil.

When it gets all muddy and unstable with liquid in it. It basically suggests the mountains. Pictures of the mountains kind of just melting away.

Because they're so saturated with blood. Obviously impressionistic imagery. Not literal.

And when it says all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved. And the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll. All their hosts.

I mean the stars shall fall down. As the leaf falls from the vine. As the fruit falling from a fig tree.

We don't have this exact imagery. In Isaiah elsewhere. But we have you know cosmic imagery elsewhere.

We have the sun being darkened. The moon not giving its light. The stars being darkened.

Changes in the cosmos. Dramatic changes have come to be expected. In some of these apocalyptic type passages.

And they in each case I believe. Are referring to things that really happen on earth. Not things up in the sky.

They are talking about political upheaval. They're talking about overthrow of nations. And it would appear from what is said next in verse 5. For my sword is bathed in heaven.

It will come down on Edom. It sounds like it is reference to the fall of the Edomite kingdom. And we're going to consider that as a possible theory.

It is certainly one theory that fits the wording. I would point out though that the wording of verse 4. Occurs also in Revelation chapter 6. And this is when the sixth seal has been broken. At the end of Revelation 6. Notice the phenomena.

Beginning at verse 12. Revelation 6, 12. I looked when he opened the sixth seal.

And behold there was a great earthquake. And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair. The moon became like blood.

The stars of heaven fell to the earth. As a fig tree drops its late figs when shaken by a mighty wind. That reference to stars falling like figs.

Is taken directly from Isaiah 34. In the passage under consideration. Then the sky receded as a scroll.

When it is rolled up. And every mountain and island was moved out of its place. Now.

The sky being rolled up like a scroll. Certainly is taken from the imagery. Of Isaiah 34.

For the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll. Now. In Revelation.

This is certainly not literal. I mean it mixes some familiar. Imagery that we've seen in several passages.

Like the sun being dark and so forth. We know that stars don't fall to earth. They can't.

They're much too large. They're much bigger than the earth. The earth would not survive a single star.

Getting even close to it. Much less falling on it. Or stars falling in great numbers.

This is imagery that is. As I say. The typical apocalyptic imagery of the prophets.

It's talking about some kind of great disaster. Usually political. Usually geopolitical.

It's usually the downfall of some great kingdom or other. And this imagery from Isaiah 34. Being mixed with that familiar imagery.

Of the sun darkened and all that. Seems to suggest that the imagery is of the same sort.

It's in other words.

Not literal of course. And. Every island being removed from its place.

Every. You know. The whole universe.

The whole world. Is. Destroyed.

In this. And yet it's not the end of the vision. There's more to come.

And there's people hiding under rocks. Before the end of the chapter. Saying who can stand.

This is the great day of the Lord's wrath. Now the great day of the Lord's wrath. I believe we shall see.

And I believe. Beyond reasonable doubt. In revelation.

It is the fall of Jerusalem. Now I say beyond reasonable doubt. Even though there are many views of revelation.

There are some parts of revelation. That are not clearly about the fall of Jerusalem. Though they may be about it anyway.

Sometimes it's not all that clear. But we shall see when we study this portion of revelation. That the seals.

They connect so. Completely. When you compare scripture with scripture.

With the events of the fall of Jerusalem. That it's hard to make it out to be anything else. Now obviously.

In revelation six. If it is talking about the fall of Jerusalem. It's borrowing language from.

Isaiah 34. Does that mean that Isaiah 34. Is about the fall of Jerusalem.

It might be. It might mean that. But of course imagery in revelation.

That is borrowed from Old Testament. Isn't always used in exactly the same connection. Imagery can be transferred to another situation.

And not be talking about the same thing. But uses the same symbols and so forth. So it would be at least a conceivable option.

To say the imagery applies to the fall of Edom. In Isaiah 34. But is reused images.

For another event. For the fall of Jerusalem. In revelation six.

That's one theory that could be. Sustained I suppose. But I would simply point out.

That we do have the recurrence of these images. In revelation. Likewise in Isaiah 34.

Nine. Apparently still talking about Edom. That is it's not.

We've been not notified in Isaiah 34. That this subject matter has changed yet. In verse nine.

It's streams shall be turned into pitch. Pitch would be of course. Flaming tar or something like that.

It's dust into brimstone. And it's. It's land shall become burning pitch.

It shall not be quenched night or day. It's smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation.

It shall lie waste. Now one thing we can say. Is this is not literal.

Because whether it's about Edom. Or any other nation that has fallen. You do not see smoke.

Rising somewhere there now today. Forever and ever. And burning pitch running in its rivers.

The imagery of fire and brimstone. And both are here. In this passage.

Is of course borrowed from the. Sodom and Gomorrah. Events.

In Genesis chapter 19. It says God rained fire and brimstone. Out of heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah.

It became the. Sort of the. A paradigm of judgment.

Of divine judgment. Whose imagery informs lots of. Judgment passages later on.

Including some of the ones in Revelation. Fire and brimstone. Brimstone is sulfur.

And so. Many times the judgment of Sodom. Provides imagery for.

Other judgments later on. Which are symbolically described. This appears to be such a case.

You've got the fire. You've got the brimstone. You may recall.

And this may or may not be significant. In interpreting chapter 34. That Jerusalem has been likened to Sodom.

In the book of Isaiah. In the very first chapter. You don't get very far before he says.

Calls the rulers of Jerusalem. Oh Sodom. And he tells them that they are like Sodom.

In more than one way. One is that they are almost wiped out. Sodom was completely wiped out.

But he said if God had not left us a small remnant. We would have been entirely wiped out. Like Sodom.

But later on God said. These people declare their sin like Sodom does. And he actually calls them Sodom.

As a nickname. And as I pointed out a number of times. In Revelation 11.8. Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom.

And Egypt. So there are connections. Between Sodom and Jerusalem.

In the thought of the judgment prophecies. Jerusalem is judged. Like Sodom.

Because Jerusalem has become sinful. Like Sodom. And here we have language borrowed.

From the Sodom and Gomorrah story. Applied to this thing. Now of course it could be Edom.

Whose judgment is likened to Sodom. In this particular case. It's obviously symbolic.

But it could be Jerusalem too. I mean at least there are reasons. Earlier in Isaiah to expect.

The judgment of Jerusalem. Being likened to Sodom. Since Jerusalem has been likened to Sodom.

Now these verses in Isaiah 34.10. You may be aware. Also inform another passage. In Revelation.

And that's chapter 14. Revelation 14. Perhaps.

One of the few passages. That are most thought. To teach the doctrine of eternal torment.

In hell. I remember that when I was a younger person. And debating with Seventh-day Adventists.

Or Jehovah's Witnesses. About the issue of hell. And defending as I did.

The doctrine of eternal torment. I felt there were. Although there were many verses

about hell.

That didn't mention anything about eternal torment. It seemed to me there was at least one. And that was this one.

And this was to my mind at that time. One of the strongest arguments. For eternal torment.

Because of the language of Revelation. 14.10.11 I guess we have to start at verse 9. To get the beginning of the sentence. Revelation 14.9 Then a third angel followed him saying with a loud voice.

If anyone worships the beast and his image. And receives his mark on his forehead. Or on his hand.

He himself shall also drink. Of the wine of the wrath of God. Which is poured out full strength.

Into the cup of his indignation. And he shall be tormented. With fire and brimstone.

In the presence of the holy angels. And in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment.

Ascends forever and ever. And they have no rest. Day or night.

Who worship the beast and his image. And whoever receives the mark of his name. Now notice how many of the images here.

Are from Isaiah 34. Fire and brimstone. Of course Revelation could borrow it directly.

From Revelation 19. And bypass Isaiah 34. We needn't say that.

The fire and brimstone in Revelation 14. Is borrowed from Isaiah 34. It could be just taken from the story.

Directly of Sodom and Gomorrah. However fire and brimstone. Are mentioned in Isaiah 34.

Along with some of the other points. That are found in this passage. The smoke of their torment.

Ascends forever and ever. That is very much like. Of course.

Isaiah 34. Its smoke shall ascend forever. And when it says they have no rest.

Day nor night. The language is not identical. But it says in Isaiah 34.

It shall not be quenched day nor night. From generation to generation. It shall lie waste.

No one shall pass through it. So there are several phrases. At least three.

In this passage in Revelation 14. That seem to be. Informed by Isaiah 34.

And I must say. That I'll have to. Come back to Revelation 19.

When we're going through Revelation. And discuss why I no longer consider this. To be necessarily a strong passage.

For the traditional view on hell. But the point is. It isn't about hell in Isaiah 34.

That might be a good reason. To believe it isn't about hell. When the same language is used.

In Revelation 14. But as far as what it is about. In Revelation 14.

We'll have to concern ourselves with that another time. But we can see that. Isaiah 34 is.

I guess. A judgment passage. That the book of Revelation.

At least. Found helpful. In getting across.

It's message of judgment. Now of course my belief. Is that Revelation in these passages.

Is talking about the judgment of Jerusalem. In 70 AD. But that is obviously a controversial belief.

I don't expect that to be a proof of anything. About Isaiah 34. Since one's beliefs about Revelation.

Are strictly. Controversial. I mean obviously there's different people.

Who take it entirely differently. Obviously the fact that. I see Revelation.

As talking about the fall of Jerusalem. Tends to. Bring me back to Isaiah 34.

And say the imagery. That is taken from this chapter. Is applied each time.

In Revelation to the fall of Jerusalem. And therefore maybe Isaiah 34. Is the fall of Jerusalem.

But maybe not. Because this could be a passage. Isaiah 34 about the fall of Edom.

And that would not prevent. The book of Revelation from picking up the language. And comparing Jerusalem to Edom.

Just like it compares Jerusalem to Babylon. Or compares Jerusalem to. Egypt.

Or Sodom. Certainly. Revelation could take a passage in Isaiah.

About Edom. And lift it's language and apply it to the fall of Jerusalem. Just like it takes language.

About the fall of Babylon from Jeremiah. And applies it to Jerusalem I believe. Of course I'm making some assumptions here.

That I haven't established. Or defended. About what Revelation is about.

And. It's nonetheless impossible for me to talk about this chapter. Without bringing them up.

But what should we say about chapter 34. Now let's suppose. It actually is about Edom.

It's entirely possible. The language encourages that. He says in verse 5 and 6. My sword shall be bathed in heaven.

Indeed it shall come down on Edom. On the people of my curse for judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood.

And at the end it says he has a sacrifice. And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. If this is Edom.

It could still morph. Into a messianic passage. In chapter 35.

Because. Edom's destruction was only a couple of centuries. Before the coming of Christ.

It could. Without. Logical.

Or illogical. Thinking. Be thought that it talks about the destruction of Edom.

And chronologically. Shortly afterwards. Came the establishment of the messianic kingdom.

And so we could simply take. Edom at face value in this passage. And say here we have.

The judgment of Edom. Followed by. Essentially devastation.

Until the time the Messiah comes. And. We'd probably solve all our problems.

The only. The only thing that remains a bit of a problem. On this to me.

Is that it would be the only time. Of the many times. In Isaiah where a transition from wilderness.

To fruitfulness. In all other cases refers to the destruction. Of Jerusalem and then the rise.

Of the new Jerusalem as it were. It'd be the only time. The only time when the city

destroyed.

Before the rise of the kingdom would be Edom. Or the nation of Edom. And.

Therefore I'm. I cannot. I can't fully rest.

With the conclusion. That it is in fact talking about Edom. Though I have no serious problem with it.

If someone says well listen. I just got to take this literally. Go for it.

You can take the rolling up the scroll. Heaven's like a scroll literally. Feel free.

I don't. So many things perhaps everything. In this chapter is symbolic.

Rivers running with flaming pitch. Smoke ascending forever. Day and night for generation to generation.

The stars falling like figs. You know there's. You'd be hard pressed to find anything.

In this chapter that is in fact literal. The wilderness description. Which is extensive.

At the end of the chapter is. Could be literal of course. Because that region.

Much of it is desert and wilderness. And it could be literal. But the use of that motif in Isaiah.

Has generally speaking been speaking of a. Non literal. Spiritual wilderness. An unfruitfulness.

And. So I think it would not be. A great leap.

To suggest that virtually everything. In the chapter is symbolic and even. Could be so construed as symbolic.

Not of necessity. But. As a possibility.

And one thing that makes me think. This is true or could be true. Is that as I said.

It's not unheard of. Even in Isaiah. To speak of Jerusalem.

In the name of pagan. Nations. And Sodom being the chief example.

Right at the very beginning of the book. He calls them rulers of Sodom. And he doesn't say.

Jerusalem is like. Sodom in that statement. He just calls them Sodom.

And so I believe. That it's possible. He might call Jerusalem Edom.

Though we haven't been. Led up to it quite as well. As with the Sodom case.

Because in chapter one he says. We would have been like Sodom. Had God not left us a very small remnant.

Then he starts calling them Sodom. He doesn't lead up to it. Giving us any clue that Edom would be Jerusalem.

And therefore it makes this theory. Somewhat weaker. But still.

It does talk about the day of the Lord's vengeance. In verse eight. And this term.

Strikes me as almost a technical term. It might not be. It might be a generic term.

It occurs about three times in Isaiah. And. In chapter 61.

Verse two. It seems to refer to AD 70. The day of the Lord's vengeance.

Isaiah 61. Verse two. I believe it's referring to 70 AD.

Because. Chapter 61. Verse one and a half.

The first half of chapter two. Of verse two. Is about Christ's first coming.

And we know that. Because Jesus said so. He quoted this.

And said it was fulfilled in his saying it. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings.

To the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken hearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives.

And the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. This is where Jesus closed the book and stopped reading.

And said this scripture has been fulfilled. In your hearing. This was in Luke chapter four.

Verse 18 and 19. But the part he didn't read was. And the day of vengeance.

Of our God. Now he says. I've come to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

But he apparently on that occasion. Did not intend to proclaim the day of vengeance. Of our God.

But later he did. And we've mentioned this verse. Numerous times.

When Jesus in the Olivet discourse. And he spoke of the destruction of the temple. In AD 70.

And Luke 21. And he said in verse 23. These are the days of vengeance.

That all things that are written. May be fulfilled. The days of vengeance.

Now it's not the exact same term. Because Isaiah says the day of vengeance. Jesus extends it to a period.

The days of vengeance. But the parallel is very close. In language.

And Jesus says that all things that are written. May be fulfilled. Suggesting that what he's describing.

As the days of vengeance. Is a common theme of Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah uses this term.

Day of vengeance. A number of times. And it seems obvious in chapter 61.

Of Isaiah. And verse 2. That it is. Isaiah closely connects it.

With the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord. Which we know Jesus proclaimed. In the synagogue.

He later proclaimed the days of vengeance. Coming. Now in chapter 63.

We also have the reference to the day of vengeance. In 63. 4. He says the day of vengeance.

Is in my heart. And the year of my redeemed has come. Now the year of.

The acceptable year of the Lord. The year of the redeemed. Jesus announced.

As existing. When he was preaching. So it seems that Isaiah 63.

Verse 4 is talking about. The time frame of Jesus first coming. The year of my redeemed has come.

He's proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. Both passages. Isaiah 61.

2 and Isaiah 63. 4 link the year of. Redemption or the year.

The acceptable year of the Lord. With the day of vengeance. These are twin.

Aspects of the same season. God brings vengeance. On the old order and establishes.

The new order with the redeemed. Isaiah 63. Therefore appears to be talking about.

The same thing that Isaiah 61 is. But we have. We've noted.

The verses in Isaiah 63. Leading up to verse 4. Talk about Edom. Isaiah 63.

1 and following says. Who is this who comes from Edom. With dyed garments.

From Bozrah. The same Bozrah is the capital. That was mentioned also in Isaiah 64.

Edom and Bozrah. The one who is glorious in his apparel. Traveling in his greatness.

Of his strength. I who speak in righteousness. Mighty to save.

And the question is asked. Why is your apparel red. And your garments like one who treads.

In the wine press. I have trodden the wine press alone. In Edom.

Where he is coming from. He has been somewhere. Doing some damage to someone.

His garments are stained with blood. He is seen coming from that event. Apparently from Edom.

The impression is that it is Edom. That has been trampled down. For 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.

For the day of vengeance. Is in my heart. And the year of my redeemed has come.

I hope you can see my dilemma here. We've got the day of vengeance. Which Jesus seems to identify.

With AD 70. And which seems obviously. Identified with AD 70.

In Isaiah 61 too. But the same term is used. In Isaiah 34.

And Isaiah 63. Both of which. Mention Edom.

As the object of judgment. Therefore. There's a few conclusions.

Could possibly be drawn. One. Is that the day of vengeance is not a technical term.

For a single event. That what happens to Jerusalem in AD 70. Is a day of vengeance.

But other judgments too. Like perhaps a separate judgment on Edom. Might be regarded as a day of God's vengeance.

That is a plausible suggestion. Another suggestion. Plausible.

Though probably some would resist it more. Just because it's not intuitive. Is that Edom is a reference to Jerusalem.

Now Jerusalem is not Edom. Obviously. But it's not Sodom either.

It's not Babylon either. And it's not Egypt either. But it's called all of those things.

In scripture. And. So it is a possibility.

That Edom in chapter 34. And. Even in chapter 63.

Both are. Insulting. References to Jerusalem.

To liken Jerusalem to Edom. Or to Sodom. Or to Babylon.

Is to insult them. To them. These pagan nations were.

Foul, dirty, uncircumcised. Hostile. Wicked people.

And to call Jerusalem by any of their names. Is like. When the book of Revelation calls a woman in the church Jezebel.

Jezebel. Probably not a real name. Who.

Would have named their daughter Jezebel. Especially since the only Jezebel. Known in history was a really wicked awful woman.

You call somebody Jezebel. And some people do that today. They talk about a certain woman.

She's a Jezebel. You know. If you call someone Jezebel today.

They'll take it as an insult. And they should. It's intended as one.

But the point is. In Revelation. A woman whose name almost certainly is not really Jezebel.

Jesus calls her. You have that woman Jezebel. In your church.

To call someone by a name. That isn't really their real name. But is intended to be an insult.

Because they have. Come to resemble that. That evil person.

Is a convention. That the scripture is not unfamiliar with. Especially Revelation.

But Isaiah also. And therefore. I'm thinking this could be a case.

Of Edom. Representing or being a nickname. For Jerusalem.

And that this. Like the other passages of its time. Is a description.

Of the fall of Jerusalem. Morphing into. The new covenant order.

The old covenant is judged. Becomes fruitless. As Jesus said to the fig tree.

No one will ever eat fruit from you again. And it withered up and died. I believe that's an emblem.

Of what was happening to Israel at that very time. Transitioning from being a tree. Potentially capable of bearing fruit.

To being one that will never have the opportunity. To bear fruit again. But a new kingdom.

A new nation who will bring forth the fruit of it. Is selected. And I believe that that transition to the new.

Is seen very plainly. In chapter 35. And verse.

Well verse 1. The first line of verse 1 is strange. It says the wilderness. And the wasteland will be glad for them.

Them seems to be a reference. To the desert creatures. In chapter 34.

Verses 16 and 17. It has previous to that. Named a whole bunch of desert creatures.

And it says in verse 16. Search from the book of the Lord. And read no one of these shall fail.

That is somewhere in the book of the Lord. God has predicted. That this wilderness situation will exist.

And all these jackals and ostriches. And so forth. Will be dominant in this region.

Rather than people. Rather than cultivated. Cities and fields.

What we have here is just. Uncultivated wildness. Given over to the creatures.

That are wild creatures. And the book of the Lord apparently. Some previous prophecy.

Maybe something Isaiah had said earlier. Is seen to have this confirmation in it. That not one of these jackals.

Or whatever will be absent. This desert situation. Is for sure going to happen.

For my mouth has commanded it. And his spirit has gathered them. And then it says.

Verse 17. It says he has cast the lot for them. This is referring to the fact.

That when Joshua. Conquered the land of Canaan. He cast lots to divide the land.

To the different tribes of Israel. The division of the. Israel into tribal regions.

The boundaries and such. And which tribe got what. And what family got what.

Was established in Joshua. By the casting of lots. And this is talking figuratively.

As if God has given the inheritance to these animals now. As Joshua gave it to. Israel.

God has now given it to. These wild beasts. And the language is as if he's casting lots.

And giving them their own inheritance there in the land. These animals. He has cast lots for them.

His hand has divided it among them. With a measuring line. They shall possess it forever.

From generation to generation. They shall dwell in it. The wilderness and the wasteland will be glad for them.

That is. They will be welcome there. The wilderness is glad to have wild beasts upon it.

Instead of the wicked people. That used to be there. Better to have these animals.

Than wicked people. But then it says. And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose.

Obviously a familiar theme. From many other passages we've encountered. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice.

Even with joy. We saw a series of passages. In Isaiah that talked about joy.

As a leading feature. Of the kingdom age. And singing.

The glory of Lebanon. Shall be given to it. The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.

The glory of Lebanon. Carmel and Sharon. Each of these places were famous for something.

Flowers, trees, something. It's just saying that the desert. Will be as beautiful as all the best.

Most well known. Most well reputed. Lush.

Watered areas. Then in verse 3. Strengthen the weak hands. And make firm the feeble knees.

Now this is important to note. You know. Probably the New Testament.

May be better than you know Isaiah. And therefore you probably are thinking. When you see this line.

You think of Hebrews chapter 12. Where the writer of Hebrews says. Therefore strengthen the hands.

Which hang down. And the feeble knees. He's basically quoting.

It's not a direct quote. But he's paraphrasing Isaiah 35. In verse 3. What's he doing it? What's the connection? He's writing to Jews who become Christians.

Hebrews is written to. Jewish believers. Shortly before the fall of Jerusalem.

There are many predictions. Or allusions. To the imminent destruction of Jerusalem.

And the passing of the old order. In the book of Hebrews. Not least is Hebrews 8.13. Where he says.

There's a new covenant. The old covenant is obsolete. And what is obsolete is about ready to vanish away.

In other words. The writer of Hebrews is living at a time. Where the old order has ceased to be relevant.

And it's imminently going to be. Swept away. With the destruction of Jerusalem.

So we know the time frame of Hebrews. Is that transition. The old order is soon going to disappear.

The new order has been introduced. His readers belong to that new order. He's writing to them about.

Enduring the chastening of the Lord. And I think very possibly in the context. He's talking about the persecution.

That they are experiencing. Because of their faithfulness to the Lord. Is like the discipline of a child.

But that's what he's talking about. In the immediate previous verses. The church is undergoing.

Some kind of suffering. Because he says in verse 11. No chastening seems to be joyful.

For the present but grievous. So the church is going through something grievous. Not joyful.

They're going through suffering of some kind. He says. Nevertheless afterward it yields

the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Oh yielding fruit. That's an Isianic thought. It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

To those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down.
And the feeble knees.

He's talking about being fruitful. He's talking about going through hardship. And yielding the fruit of righteousness.

The very fruit that Isaiah. Says is what God is seeking from his people. And so Isaiah 35.

Begins with the description of this fruitfulness. And it says therefore. Strengthen the weak hands.

And make firm the feeble knees. Now these are expressions that mean. Encourage.

Those who are discouraged. But it's interesting that. In Hebrews.

This particular verse. From Isaiah 34 would be quoted. Right after the reference to being fruitful.

Your discipline is going to make you fruitful. It's going to yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore.

It's almost like he's paraphrasing. Verses 1 and 2. Of Isaiah 35. And verse Isaiah 35.

4 says say to those who are fearful hearted. Be strong do not fear. Behold.

Your God will come with vengeance. With the recompense of God. He will come and save you.

Now the remnant. In Israel will be saved. But he will come with vengeance.

Toward whom. Well. Toward the apostate.

And that's essentially what. Hebrews 12 goes on to talk about. His statement in the last verse.

Of Hebrews 12. Our God is a consuming fire. Is a reference to this judgment.

That is coming. And in chapter 13. He said.

Verse 14. He says for here we have no continuing city. Jerusalem is not going to continue.

The heavenly Jerusalem continues. And he's already said that. In chapter 12 verse 22.

Hebrews 12. You have come to Mount Zion. To the city of the living God.

The heavenly Jerusalem. To an innumerable company of angels. The general assembly and church.

Of the first born who registered in heaven. But here on earth. We have no continuing city.

He's talking to Jewish people. About their capital city Jerusalem. It's not long for this world.

It's about to go down. We seek one to come. So there is reference here.

To the impending judgment on Jerusalem. And encouragement to the remnant. Of Jews who have come to believe in Christ.

To strengthen their hands. And their knees. And using terms.

That are taken from Isaiah 35. As if he sees. Them living in the time.

In that very transition. That Isaiah 34 and 35 is describing. Now back to 35 again.

Isaiah verse 5. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened. And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer.

The tongue of the dumb shall sing. And the water shall burst forth. In the wilderness and springs in the desert.

Now except for the last two lines. Verses 5 and 6. Are alluded to by Jesus. In that passage.

Where John the Baptist. Sends messengers asking. Are you the one who is to come or not? This is in Matthew chapter 11.

And it says in the opening verses. Now it came to pass. When Jesus finished commanding his 12 disciples.

That he departed from there. To teach and preach in their cities. And when John heard in prison.

About the works of Christ. He sent two of his disciples. And said to him.

Are you the coming one or do we look for another? And Jesus answered and said to them. Go tell John the things. Which you hear and see.

The blind received their sight. The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed.

And the deaf hear. And the dead are raised up. And the poor have the gospel preached

to them.

And blessed is he who is not offended because of me. Now the items that Jesus mentions. With only one exception.

The dead are raised up. Come directly from two passages in Isaiah. The reference to the blind received their sight.

The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear.

Is obviously referring to the kind of miracles. That Isaiah 35 is talking about. And there is no question.

That Jesus was alluding to it. Verse 5. The eyes of the blind shall be opened. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

The lame shall leap like a deer. The tongue of the dumb shall sing. Jesus words also allude to Isaiah 61.

Where Jesus said. The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because he is anointing me to preach the gospel to the poor.

What Jesus says there. In Matthew 11. The poor have the gospel preached to them.

Just like Isaiah 61. Said. So he is alluding to different passages.

Messianic passages. In Isaiah. And saying tell John it is happening.

Put it together. Now interestingly. He also adds in there.

The dead are raised up. That might also allude to something in Isaiah. It is not clear.

But we saw earlier. Back in chapter 26. In chapter 26.

Verse 19. It said your dead shall live. Together with my dead body shall they arise.

The passage is not clear. Exactly what it is talking about. It sounds to me like it is talking about us being raised with Christ.

In his resurrection. But at the same time. There is reference to dead people coming alive.

And Jesus says tell John. There are dead people coming alive. There are blind people seeing.

There are poor people having the gospel preached to them. It is almost like a litany of passages from Isaiah. But especially Isaiah 35.

That Jesus is sending. As his message back. To John.

To encourage him that this is in fact. What the Messiah is supposed to do. And blessed is the man who is not stumbled by me.

Now. In the second part of Isaiah 35. 6 and 7. It is the typical image of waters in the desert.

There are passages. Cross references in Isaiah. Which refer to this water.

As actually the spirit being poured out from on high. We don't have time to go looking for those passages. And dealing with them again now.

But we have seen them. This is the pouring out of the spirit. So that the desert land becomes fruitful.

And flourishes. Verse 8 has the highway motif again. Which we have seen in a number of passages.

The one that probably most obviously connects it with the messianic age. And Jesus coming. Is Isaiah 40.

Which we know from many references in the New Testament. Is about John the Baptist. Isaiah 40 in verse 6. Or excuse me.

In verse 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway.

For our God. This is not a literal highway. It's a spiritual highway.

But John the Baptist is the voice. He said so. So did the gospel writers.

So did Jesus. All of them said this about John. He's the voice saying let's prepare the highway now.

Let's remove the stones. Let's exalt the low spots. And bring down the high spots.

And make a smooth road for the Lord to travel. And therefore this highway. Which comes up frequently in Isaiah.

Is unambiguously interpreted for us. As belonging to the age. When the Messiah came.

And John the Baptist was announcing it. A highway shall be there at a road. It shall be called the highway of holiness.

Apparently meaning you walk the way of holiness. Holiness is the way that the people travel. The way they live in other words.

As Christians. The unclean shall not pass over it. But it shall be for others.

Whoever walks the road. Although a fool shall not go astray. It doesn't take a rocket scientist.

To live the way of holiness. You can be generally speaking kind of dumb. But you can still walk.

The way of righteousness. God has chosen. The foolish things of the world.

To confound the wise. There's not many wise. Not many noble are called.

God has chosen the weak things. And the foolish things. You don't have to be real smart to follow Jesus.

It says no lion shall be there. Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it. Apparently when you're walking in holiness.

You are exempt. From the harm the enemy can do. Not physical harm of course.

This is talking about spiritual things. When Peter says. In 1 Peter chapter 5. Be vigilant be sober.

Your adversary the devil like a roaring lion. Walks about seeking whom he may devour. He's not talking about physical harm.

We're not supposed to be watching out for physical harm. Necessarily. I mean obviously if there's.

Clear physical danger we can avoid it. Then we should. But that is not the Christians duty.

Is not to avoid getting hurt. The Christians duty. Is to avoid getting corrupted.

Sinning. Going astray. That's what the devil devouring somebody.

Would mean is he's reclaimed them. He's drawn them. Off the highway of holiness.

Into his own jaws. And they have become his victims. To be a victim of the devil doesn't mean you've been a martyr.

That's not a victim. You win when you're a martyr. That's how they overcome him.

That's how they overcome the devil. By not loving their lives to the death. In Revelation 12.

Dying is not losing. Dying is overcoming. It's winning it's conquering.

What is losing is when you allow yourself. To be compromised and corrupted. That's what the devil wants.

So when you're on the highway of holiness. The lion cannot corrupt you. Now if he can get you off the highway.

There's lions along side the highway. But not on the highway. You will be safe spiritually.

As long as you are on that highway. Walking in holiness. Isaiah 35.

Then says. Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it. It shall not be found there.

But the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return. And come to Zion with singing.

This actually. This verse is very much like. In fact it's essentially verbatim.

Like Isaiah 51.11. And. The theme is found in a number of places. In Isaiah.

The people returning to Zion. Ransomed by the Lord. And we saw in our topical lectures.

That this idea of redeemed. Is probably in it's first instance. Calling to mind.

Being redeemed from the Babylonian exile. Though it could be redeemed from Egypt. Because the exodus and the return of the exiles.

Are both referred to as God redeeming his people. And now. This is of course talking about a redemption.

Of a spiritual sort. Of an eternal sort. But the return to Zion.

Would probably to the exiles. Be the idea that. Cyrus lets them go.

They leave Babylon. They go back to Jerusalem to rebuild it. That's what they did.

And so. The imagery could be. In it's first instance.

A picture of exiles. Returning to Jerusalem. But of course spiritually.

It's those who are being saved. We saw that. In Isaiah chapter 10.

I think it's verse 22. It said. Though the children of Israel be as the sand of the seashore.

Yet only a remnant shall return. And Paul quoted that. In Romans 9. He quoted a remnant shall be saved.

Returning is salvation. In these verses. With everlasting joy on their heads.

Again the joy motif. They shall obtain joy. And gladness and sorrow.

And sighs shall flee away. Ultimately. Israel has been sighing.

In sorrow because of affliction. Persecution. Like a woman in labor.

To bring forth the Messiah. And the coming of the Messiah. Actually is the end of those sighings.

Not the end of persecution. But it's the realization of the dream. It's the realization of the messianic hope.

The messianic hope. Unfortunately the Jews. Mistook the messianic hope.

To be an end of persecution. An end of physical oppression. And the angels said.

No no it's not about that. He's going to deliver people from their sins. Not from their political enemies.

And oppressors. That comes much later. When.

When he establishes justice in the earth. And. And the whole world.

Is. Then under his rule. Then there will be no more persecution.

In the meantime there is freedom. From the bondage of sin. There is.

Victory. Over the oppression of the enemy. This victory sometimes.

Is in the midst of persecution. In the midst of even martyrdom. And this is often seen in history.

Where the martyrs as they are dying. Are exhibiting their victorious joy. Everlasting joy.

Is upon their heads. That many martyrs died singing and praising God. With their hands lifted in the air.

As the lions attacked them. Or as the flames were around them. Consuming them.

These are spiritual. Realities. That are being discussed.

And of course the biggest mistake. That the Jews apparently made. And the reason they rejected Christ.

Was they expected him to bring these things about physically. That's why John the Baptist. Was curious.

Are you really the one. Here I am rotting in a prison under a Roman authority. I thought you were supposed to eradicate the Romans.

From our land. Isn't that what the Messiah is supposed to do? Are you the one or not? And Jesus is saying. You've got the wrong picture.

Let me remind you of what Isaiah said. Let me remind you of the messianic picture. Of Isaiah.

This is the poor being evangelized. The sick are being healed. This is the messianic victory.

This is the spreading of a spiritual kingdom. It doesn't make the Romans go away. But eventually it will convert them.

And the empire will be Christian then. But in the meantime. The Messiah doesn't just come drive out all the enemies physically.

But he does bring deliverance. And so I believe also. That many Christians make the same mistake the Jews did.

And they see these passages. About the messianic era. Are supposed to be geopolitical.

Physical deliverance. And that's why they put it off. Until the second coming of Christ.

And make it the millennial kingdom. But the apostles. Now maybe by the way.

When Jesus comes back in the new earth. Maybe all these things will be. Essentially literally true.

I think they will be. But it says in Hebrews chapter 6. That we have tasted of the powers of the age to come. The apostles may have felt.

That there is someday. A literal fulfillment of these things. But we don't have to wait until then.

They have come upon us now. Through the spirit. Righteousness, peace and joy.

In the Holy Spirit. That's the kingdom of God. And we don't have to wait until Jesus comes back for that.

He already brought that. And so the apostles as we saw. In many cases referred to these passages.

And never doubted for a moment. That they had been fulfilled. In fact they affirmed it.

They quoted these passages to prove the points. That we're making about the present state. Of the church.

So we. Have taken those chapters. What remains of the first part of Isaiah.

What we call the book of judgment. Is the four chapters. 36 through 39.

Which are a historical interlude. And we will take those in our next session.

