
ISAIAH 34: 1 Come near, you nations, to hear! Listen, you peoples. Let the earth and all it contains hear; the world, and everything that comes from it.

The prophet earnestly exhorts all nations to attend to the communication which he has received from Jehovah, as the matter is of the highest importance, and of universal concern, Isa 34:1. The wrath of God is denounced against all the nations that had provoked to anger the Defender of the cause of Zion, Isa 34:2, Isa 34:3. Great crowd of images, by which the final overthrow and utter extermination of every thing that opposes the spread of true religion in the earth are forcibly and majestically set forth; images so very bold and expressive as to render it impossible, without doing great violence to symbolical language, to restrain their import to the calamities which befell the Edomites in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, or in that of any other potentate, or even to the calamities which the enemies of the Church have yet suffered since the delivery of the prophecy. Edom must therefore be a type of Antichrist, the last grand adversary of the people of God; and consequently this most awful prophecy, in its ultimate signification, remains to be accomplished, Isa 34:4-15. The Churches of God, at the period of the consummation, commanded to consult the book of Jehovah, and note the exact fulfillment of these terrible predictions in their minutest details. Not one jot or little relative even to the circumstances shadowed forth by the impure animals shall be found to fail; for what the mouth of the Lord has declared necessary to satisfy the Divine justice, his Spirit will accomplish, Isa 34:16, Isa 34:17.

This and the following chapter make one distinct prophecy; an entire, regular, and beautiful poem, consisting of two parts: the first containing a denunciation of Divine vengeance against the enemies of the people or Church of God; the second describing the flourishing state of the Church of God consequent upon the execution of those judgments. The event foretold is represented as of the highest importance, and of universal concern: All nations are called upon to attend to the declaration of it; and the wrath of God is denounced against all the nations, that is, all those that had provoked to anger the Defender of the cause of Zion. Among those, Edom is particularly specified. The principal provocation of Edom was their insulting the Jews in their distress, and joining against them with their enemies, the Chaldeans; see Amo 1:11; Eze 25:12; Eze 35:15; Psa 137:7. Accordingly the Edomites were, together with the rest of the neighboring nations, ravaged and laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar; see Jer 25:15-26; Mal 1:3, Mal 1:4, and see Marsham, Can. Chron. Saec. xviii., who calls this the age of the destruction of cities. The general devastation spread through all these countries by Nebuchadnezzar may be the event which the prophet has primarily in view in the thirty-fourth chapter: but this event, as far as we have any account of it in history, seems by no means to come up to the terms of the prophecy, or to justify so highly wrought and terrible a description; and it is not easy to discover what connection the extremely flourishing state of the Church or people of God, described in the next chapter, could have with those events, and how the former could be the consequence of the latter, as it is there represented to be. By a figure, very common in the prophetic writings, any city or people, remarkably distinguished as enemies of the people and kingdom of God, is put for those enemies in general. This seems here to be the case with Edom and Botsra. It seems, therefore, reasonable to suppose, with many learned expositors, that this prophecy has a farther view to events still future; to some great revolutions to be effected in later times, antecedent to that more perfect state of the kingdom of God upon earth, and serving to introduce it, which the Holy Scriptures warrant us to expect.

That the thirty-fifth chapter has a view beyond any thing that could be the immediate consequence of those events, is plain from every part, especially from the middle of it, Isa 35:5, Isa 35:6; where the miraculous works wrought by our blessed Savior are so clearly specified, that we cannot avoid making the application: and our Savior himself has moreover plainly referred to this very passage, as speaking of him and his works, Mat 11:4, Mat 11:5. He bids the disciples of John to go and report to their master the things which they heard and saw; that the blind received their sight, the lame walked, and the deaf heard; and leaves it to him to draw the conclusion in answer to his inquiry, whether he who performed the very works which the prophets foretold should be performed by the Messiah, was not indeed the Messiah himself. And where are these works so distinctly marked by any of the prophets as in this place? and how could they be marked more distinctly? To these the strictly literal interpretation of the prophet's words directs us. According to the allegorical interpretation they may have a farther view: this part of the prophecy may run parallel with the former and relate to the future advent of Christ; to the conversion of the Jews, and their restitution to their land; to the extension and purification of the Christian faith; events predicted in the Holy Scriptures as preparatory to it. Kimchi says, "This chapter points out the future destruction of Rome, which is here called Bosra; for Bosra was a great city of the Edomites. Now the major part of the Romans are Edomites, who profess the law of Jesus. The Emperor Caesar (qy. Constantine) was an Edomite, and so were all the emperors after him. The destruction of the Turkish empire is also comprehended in this prophecy." - L. As to the last, I say, Amen!

Verse 1

Hearken "Attend unto me" - A MS. adds in this line the word **אלי** ali, unto me, after **לְאִמִּים** leummim; which seems to be genuine.

ISAIAH 34: 2 For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and angry with all their armies. He has utterly destroyed them. He has given them over for slaughter.

ISAIAH 34: 3 Their slain will also be cast out, and the stench of their dead bodies will come up; and the mountains will melt in their blood.

ISAIAH 34: 4 All of the army of the sky will be dissolved. The sky will be rolled up like a scroll, and all its armies will fade away, as a leaf fades from off a vine or a fig tree.

Verse 4

And all the host of heaven See note on Isa 24:21, and De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum, Prael. ix.

ISAIAH 34: 5 For my sword has drunk its fill in the sky. Behold, it will come down on Edom, and on the people of my curse, for judgement.

Verse 5

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven "For my sword is made bare in the heavens" - There seems to be some impropriety in this, according to the present reading: "My sword is made drunken, or is bathed in the heavens; "which forestalls, and expresses not in its proper place, what belongs to the

next verse: for the sword of Jehovah was not to be bathed or glutted with blood in the heavens, but in Botsra and the land of Edom. In the heavens it was only prepared for slaughter. To remedy this, Archbishop Secker proposes to read, for **בשמים** bashshamayim, **בדמם** bedamim; referring to Jer 46:10. But even this is premature, and not in its proper place. The Chaldee, for **רותה** rivvethah, has **תתגלי** tithgalli, shall be revealed or disclosed: perhaps he read **תראה** teraeh or **נראתה** nirathah. Whatever reading, different I presume from the present, he might find in his copy, I follow the sense which he has given of it.

ISAIAH 34: 6 The LORD's sword is filled with blood. It is covered with fat, 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.

Verse 6

The Lord hath a sacrifice "For Jehovah celebrateth a sacrifice" - Ezekiel, Eze 39:16, Eze 39:17, has manifestly imitated this place of Isaiah. He hath set forth the great leaders and princes of the adverse powers under the same emblems of goats, bulls, rams, fatlings, etc., and has added to the boldness of the imagery, by introducing God as summoning all the fowls of the air, and all the beasts of the field, and bidding them to the feast which he has prepared for them by the slaughter of the enemies of his people: - "And thou, son of man,

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
 Say to the bird of every wing,
 And to every beast of the field:
 Assemble yourselves, and come;
 Gather together from every side,
 To the sacrifice which I make for you,
 A great slaughter on the mountains of Israel.
 And ye shall eat flesh and drink blood:
 The flesh of the mighty shall ye eat,
 And the blood of the lofty of the earth shall ye drink;
 Of rams, of lambs, and of goats,
 Of bullocks, all of them the fat ones of Bashan;
 And ye shall eat fat, till ye are cloyed,
 And drink blood, till ye are drunken;
 Of my slaughter, which I have slain for you."

The sublime author of the Rev 19:17, Rev 19:18, has taken this image from Ezekiel, rather than from Isaiah.

ISAIAH 34: 7 The wild oxen will come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; and their land will be drunken with blood, and their dust made greasy with fat.

Verse 7

The unicorns shall come down - רֵאמִים reemim, translated wild goats by Bishop Lowth. The רֵאֵם reem Bochart thinks to be a species of wild goat in the deserts of Arabia. It seems generally to mean the rhinoceros.

With blood "With their blood" - מִדַּמָּם middamam; so two ancient MSS. of Kennicott's the Syriac, and Chaldee.

ISAIAH 34: 8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

Verse 8

The year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion "The year of recompense to the defender of the cause of Zion" - As from דִּין din, דָּן dun, a judge; so from רִיב rib, רֹב rub, an advocate, or defender; Judici Sionis: Syriac.

ISAIAH 34: 9 Its streams will be turned into pitch, its dust into sulfur, And its land will become burning pitch.

ISAIAH 34: 10 It won't be quenched night nor day. Its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation, it will lie waste. No one will pass through it forever and ever.

ISAIAH 34: 11 But the pelican and the porcupine will possess it. The owl and the raven will dwell in it. He will stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plumb line of emptiness.

Verse 11

The cormorant - קֵאֵת kaath, the pelican, from the root קִיא ki, to vomit, because it is said she swallows shell-fish, and when the heat of her stomach has killed the fish, she vomits the shells, takes out the dead fish, and eats them.

The bittern - קִפּוֹד kippod, the hedge-hog, or porcupine.

The owl - יָנֹשֹׁף yanshoph, the bittern, from נִשָּׁף nashaph, to blow, because of the blowing noise it makes, almost like the lowing of an ox. My old MS. Bible renders the words thus: - The foule in face like an asse, and the yrchoun, and the snyte (snipe.)

The line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness "The plummet of emptiness over her scorched plains" - The word חֲרִיָּה choreyha, joined to the 12th verse, embarrasses it, and makes it inexplicable. At least I do not know that any one has yet made out the construction, or given any tolerable explication of it. I join it to the 11th verse, and supply a letter or two, which seem to have

been lost. Fifteen MSS. five ancient, and two editions, read חוריה choreyha; the first printed edition of 1486, I think nearer to the truth, חור חריה chor choreyha. I read בחרריה becharereyha, or על חריה al chorereyha; see Jer 17:6. A MS. has חדיה chodiah, and the Syriac reads חדוה chaduah, gaudium, joining it to the two preceding words; which he likewise reads differently, but without improving the sense. However, his authority is clear for dividing the verses as they are here divided. I read שם shem, as a noun. They shall boast, יקראו yikreu; see Pro 20:6.

ISAIAH 34: 12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, but none shall be there; and all its princes shall be nothing.

ISAIAH 34: 13 Thorns will come up in its palaces, nettles and thistles in its fortresses; and it will be a habitation of jackals, a court for ostriches.

Verse 13

And thorns shall come up in her palaces - ועלו בארמנותיה vealu bearmenotheyha; so read all the ancient versions.

A court for owls - יענה yaanah, the ostrich, from ענה anah, to cry, because of the noise it makes. "They roar," says Dr. Shaw, "sometimes like a lion - sometimes like a bull. I have often heard them groan as if in the utmost distress."

ISAIAH 34: 14 The wild animals of the desert will meet with the wolves, and the wild goat will cry to his fellow. Yes, the night creature shall settle there, and shall find herself a place of rest.

Verse 14

The wild beasts of the desert - ציים tsiyim, the mountain cats. - Bochart.

Wild beasts of the island - איים aiyim, the jackals.

The satyr - שעיר seir, the hairy one, probably the he-goat.

The screech owl - לילית lilith, the night-bird, the night-raven, nyctycorax, from ליל layil, or לילה lailah, the night.

ISAIAH 34: 15 The arrow snake will make her nest there, and lay, hatch, and gather under her shade. Yes, the kites will be gathered there, every one with her mate.

Verse 15

The great owl - קפוז kippoz, the ακοντιας, or darter, a serpent so called because of its suddenly leaping up or darting on its prey. Probably the mongoose or ichneumon may be intended.

The vultures - דיוֹת daiyoth, the black vultures. My old MS. Bible renders these names curiously: And ageyn cumen schul devylis: the beste, party of an asse, and party of a mam: and the wodwose, the tother schal crien to the tother. There schal byn lamyas, that is, thrisses, or a beste, havynge the body liic a woman, and hors feet. Ther hadde dichis, the yrchoun, and nurshide out littil chittis. There ben gadred kiitis, the top to the top. What language!

Every one with her mate - A MS. adds אל el after אשה ishshah, which seems necessary to the construction; and so the Syriac and Vulgate. Another MS. adds in the same place את eth, which is equivalent.

ISAIAH 34: 16 Search in the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these will be missing. none will lack her mate. For my mouth has commanded, and his Spirit has gathered them.

Verse 16

My mouth "For the mouth of Jehovah" - For הוא hu, five MSS., (three ancient), read יהוה Jehovah, and another is so corrected; so likewise the Septuagint. Two editions have צוֹם tsivam; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Arabic, with the edition of 1486, and a MS. has קבצם kebatsam, with the masculine pronoun instead of the feminine: and so in the next verses it is להם lahem, instead of להן lahen, in fourteen MSS., six of them ancient. - L. To see the importance of these various readings, the Hebrew Bible must be consulted.

ISAIAH 34: 17 He has cast the lot for them, and his hand has divided it to them with a measuring line. They shall possess it forever. From generation to generation they will dwell in it.