



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTERS 34-35

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 34-35

The future of Edom, and of the Remnant. Chapters 34-35, Summary and Comments

The first four verses refer to God's anger with the whole world: The Lord Is angry with all nations. Then a wonderful piece of apocalyptic language in 4: "The stars of the heavens will be dissolved, and the sky will roll up as if a scroll, and the starry host will fall." This is much like the language of Matthew 24:29-35. Much the same language is found also in Isaiah 13:9-10 on the fall of Babylon. We gather that although God could make these things happen at what seems to be face value, yet, considering that the genre is apocalyptic, it is more likely that the imagery is greatly exaggerated.

Then in the next verse, v. 6, the prophet turns to Edom, which often stands, like Babylon, for a power opposed to God's people, even though Edom descended from

Esau, brother of Jacob, and even though God in Dt 2:1-7 had told Israel to treat Edom like a brother. Yet Edom was noted for much hostility against Judah. Edom had refused the Israelites permission to pass through the territory on their way to the Promised Land, so they had to go around. (cf. Obadiah-- all 21 verses of the book!) More trouble from Edom when Judah was returning from exile.

God's sword is ready in the heavens it has drunk its fill of wrath there, for he has made his judgment against Edom. His sword has as it were made Edom a victim for sacrifice. Edom's streams will become pitch and its dust like burning sulphur -- poetic hyperbole of course.

It will lie desolate for generations and the desert owl and screech owl will possess it. Of course, the animals could not live in pitch and burning sulphur - so again we see clearly this is apocalyptic with exaggeration.

He continues saying the nobles will have no kingdom left, princes will vanish, thorns will overrun the citadels. Wild animals will make their home there. V, 14 says the Lilith will be there. In later Jewish literature that was the name of a female demon who was supposed to abduct children - superstition of course. Without accepting the myth, Isaiah can use the imagery.

Isaiah tells later generations to look at the scroll in which he has written this, and see that it has been fulfilled. Of course, we still must consider the literary genre and the hyperbole. After the fall of Jerusalem in 596, 586, some Edomites moved into the southern part of Judah. Still more came during the Persian period. In the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-05) Edom was incorporated into the Jewish nation, and even accepted circumcision.

Next Isaiah speaks to Judah, which seems at the time to be in exile. He promises it will blossom again and have the glory of Lebanon. They will see the glory of the Lord. So strengthen feeble knees, do not fear, your God will come with vengeance to save you. He predicts that the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the dumb will be healed (cf. Mt 11:5), and streams will gush in the desert.

There will be a holy highway, called holy since the holy people will return from exile on it. No lion or other beast will threaten those who return. They will enter Zion singing, with everlasting joy on their heads.

Of course there is multiple fulfillment here. It was fulfilled in the return from exile, but not in so grand a fashion. The fullness awaits the redemption of all nature by the Messiah, of which St. Paul speaks in Romans 8:19-25.

End of Chapters 34-35