

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text
Isaiah 34:1-17

Topic
When He returns, Jesus summons the nations

Title
“The General Assembly Of The Indicted Nations”

- One time he was sprayed by a hose.
- Another time he had to chase after a woman who tried to evade him on her riding lawnmower.
- He always has an empty pizza box in his car in case he pretends he's delivering dinner.

Who is he? He is a Process Server attempting to serve a subpoena to summon a person to appear in court.

I've been served twice. Don't worry; I was served as a witness, not a defendant. I didn't attempt evasion, so there's no humorous anecdote.

In our text, the LORD issues a summons.

The CSB version of verse one reads, "You nations, come here and listen; you peoples, pay attention! Let the Earth and all that fills it hear, the world and all that comes from it."

Jesus Christ is returning to Earth. He is coming at the end of the 7yr Time of Jacob's Trouble that we most often call the Great Tribulation. At some point between His

return and the beginning of the Kingdom of God on Earth, Jesus will summon the Gentile nations of the world in order to identify who of the survivors of the Tribulation will enter the Kingdom in their mortal bodies.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Will See The Carnage At The Lord's Coming**, and **#2 You Will See The Captives After The Lord's Coming**.

#1 - You Will See The Carnage At The Lord's Coming (v1-10)

Would you believe me if I told you that the phrase, 'Second Coming,' never occurs in the Bible? Not once?

While there are hundreds of references to the Lord's glorious return, *no Bible writer called it the Second Coming.*

It's not wrong to call the Lord's return the Second Coming. I'm sure I will continue to do so. It might be more accurate to call it the Return of the King. You could go Greek; the Greek word *parousia* (pair-oo-see-ah) is a noun that means *a coming* or a *presence*. Our friends at gotquestions.org say:

Primarily this word refers to the Coming of the Lord Jesus. It can refer to either His Second Coming at the END of the 7-year Tribulation period, or to His coming to [resurrect and] rapture His Church PRIOR to the 7-year Tribulation. You have to look at the context to determine whether it refers to His appearing in the air to rapture the Church, or whether it refers to His Second Coming back to Earth to setup His Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah wrote about the Return-of-the-King *parousia*.

Isa 34:1 Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people! Let the Earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.

Heaven issues a summons, a notice to appear, to the Gentile "nations" of Earth. Another summons goes out to "the Earth," identified as "all the things that come forth from it." This prophecy is global and cosmic in its scope.

Isa 34:2 For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations, And *His* fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.

The Lord has "indignation" against "all nations" that persecuted or would not help His people, Israel. Jesus will utterly destroy all their "armies," but not the nations themselves. Nations will continue to exist in eternity. They are mentioned three times in the Revelation, in eternity (21:2&26; 22:2).

Isa 34:3 Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

If you thought "carnage" was too harsh a word in my outline, it is mild compared to Isaiah's description. Another Bible translation reads, "Their dead bodies will be left to rot and stink; their blood will flow down the mountains." It is repulsive.

It's painful to read this. It's nearly unbearable to realize that this will only be the beginning of their suffering. While their bodies are left to rot on earth, the wicked dead, are in Hades. They will be resurrected to be judged, then thrown into the Lake of Fire, conscious and tormented forever.

Why so brutal? Sin is ugly. When Jesus returns, and He destroys the armies, we see in their slain condition something of what "the wages of sin" looks like.

Thomas Watson said, "*Let them fear death who do not fear sin.*"

Isa 34:4 All the host of Heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

At the Lords return, there will be disturbances in the stellar heavens. This is a poetic description of some of their power and effect.

Isa 34:5 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 language here makes it sound like Jesus polished-up His ceremonial sword. The ESV translates it more realistically, as do most modern versions: "*For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction.*"

The Lord said something similar in Deuteronomy, "*I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy*" (32:42).

The Bible isn't portraying Jesus with a sword in His hand, hacking away at enemy soldiers. His return is described in Revelation nineteen, where we read, "out of His mouth goes a sharp **sword**, that with it He should strike the nations... [they] were killed with the **sword** which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh" (v15&21). Jesus kills with the power of the Word of God.

It was said of Jesus that no one ever spoke like Him. He spoke with authority, every word true, with power to deliver and save. His words were beautiful, wondrous. They pierced your heart. They forgave, they blessed even His enemies. But for those who do not wish to hear Him, His words proclaim your perishing in the Second Death.

Isa 34:6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness, 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.

The priests in the Temple sprinkled the blood of the animal that was sacrificed, and burned its fat.

Isaiah employs it as a metaphor. Albert Barnes explained, "These were the animals which were usually offered in sacrifice to God among the Jews. **Yet it is evident that they denote here people.**"

Jesus sacrificed Himself on the Cross at Calvary as a substitute for every member of the human race. Salvation is available to all men. You need only believe God and He will count it for righteousness.

Without His substitution, you face judgement for your sin, alone and in your own body, by your own works that fall far short of you getting into Heaven.

Do you use TurboTax? I always refuse to pay extra to be represented if we get audited. If we get audited... *I hope I don't regret it.*

You and I require expert representation at the Cross.

Isa 34:7 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."

Isaiah employed illustrations, e.g., animals representing men, but this is no allegory. Blood *will* be shed.

Isa 34:8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

Isa 34:9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone; Its land shall become burning pitch.

Isa 34:10 It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

"Day" and "year" describe periods. "Forever" means until the end of that age, or as we might say, until the end of the dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom.

In *The Lion King*, Scar convinces Simba to take Nala to the off-limits dangerous and mysterious Elephant Graveyard. They can see it afar off.

Here in verses eight, nine, & ten, Isaiah indicates that the region of Bozrah, in Edom, will not be restored in the Millennium. It will continually burn throughout that time. I wasn't ready for that, but it's true. The Millennium will be wonderful, but not perfect. It can't be perfect because there will be mortals in it. Thus there will be things in it that won't be in eternity.

Why Edom? Why Bozrah? Jesus taught His disciples about the future Tribulation in Matthew twenty-four. The antichrist will enter the rebuilt Jewish Temple to defile it. At that moment, Jesus warned the Jews to flee to the wilderness with nothing but the clothes they are wearing.

Commentators believe they will go to Petra. It is the fortress-city in the land of Edom. (Petra was rediscovered in 1812 in what is Southern Jordan today).

In the rock fortress of Petra, God will miraculously protect the Jews over the final 1260 days of the Tribulation. He will defeat part of antichrist's army at Bozrah. Listen to this from Isaiah chapter sixty-three:

Isa 63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, With [blood stained] garments **from Bozrah**, This *One who is* glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength? - "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

This is the same event in chapter thirty-four, the *parousia*, with additional details.

Isaiah sees Jesus bloodstained from battle at Bozrah. There are a number of scholars we trust who believe that Jesus will first return to Bozrah, not the more commonly held belief that He returns to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus' return reads like a military campaign. Wherever you think He returns first, there are several movements. The Bozrah-first contingent, for example, identify eight stages.¹

1. The gathering and staging of all the world's armies at Armageddon.
2. God destroys Babylon, antichrist's capital.
3. Jerusalem is attacked, and half the city falls.
4. The armies of the antichrist attack the Jews in Edom holed up in Bozrah.
5. Israel calls upon Jesus as their Messiah and experiences national regeneration.
6. The King returns to Bozrah and defeats antichrist's forces. All Israel is saved.
7. The armies of the world are destroyed from Bozrah all the way to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
8. Jesus ascends the Mount of Olives in triumph.

Exact timelines for Bible events can be difficult to determine. Hold to them loosely.

We are not mentioned in this text. We couldn't be mentioned because Isaiah didn't know about the Church.

The apostle Paul states that the Church was a *mystery* until he revealed it.

God distinguishes between three groups: The nation of Israel, the Gentile nations, and the Church (First Corinthians 10:32). The Church has not replaced or superseded Israel. The rebirth of national Israel in May of 1948 is all the proof you should need that the Lord has not cast off the Jews in favor of the Church.

The Lord will gather us to Himself in His *parousia*, the one we call the Rapture, prior to the Tribulation. We **are** in this chapter, *parousia*-ing with the Lord.

#2 - You Will See Captives After The Lord's Coming (v11-17)

Pelicans, porcupines, owls, ravens, jackals, ostriches, wild beasts of the desert, wild goats, the arrow snake, and hawks; Other Bible translations mention

¹ The last page of this transcript has a list of references for the Eight Stages.

vultures, hyenas, dragons, wildcats, buzzards, skunks, and Sonic; Commentators redefine some of these animals as cormorants, bitterns, eagles, crows, foxes, and wolves.

Is this the Bible, or *Doctor Doolittle*?

Look at verse twelve. "They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none *shall be* there, and all its princes shall be nothing." The nation of Edom will cease to exist in the future Kingdom of Jesus on Earth. Its lands will become the deserted, desolate habitation of these various creatures.

You guys are pretty sharp, so you noticed I failed to mention one creature, obviously the most intriguing one listed: "The **night creature** shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest."

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says, "*The term ['night creature' or] 'night-monster' is a hypothetical translation of the Hebrew term Lilith, used once only. The lil, or ghost, was a night-demon of terrible and baleful influence upon men.*"

A medieval Jewish text, *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, mythologically describes Lilith as Adam's first wife. She disobeyed both her husband and God by asserting her equality to Adam. (She was the first to abandon complimentarianism for egalitarianism!).

Isaiah's intended audience would have understood from his inclusion of the night-monster that the beasts Isaiah listed were symbolic of various supernatural creatures.

If you've watched the film version of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, you remember the sacrifice of Aslan. Jadis, the White Queen, was surrounded by multitudes of weird creatures that represented evil supernaturals.

Throughout the Millennial Kingdom, folks will be able to see the Elephant Graveyard, so to speak. Evil supernaturals will be contained there. Will it be like a zoo??

Verses eleven through fifteen list the animals and reinforce their confinement and the desolation of the land of Edom during the Millennium.

If you are still having difficulty thinking that Isaiah was referring to supernatural beings, remember that at the Cross, we are told, in Psalm twenty-two, "Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me *with*

their mouths, *Like* a raging and roaring lion" (v12-13). These, of course, were *not* bulls and lions. They represented the demonic forces attacking the Lord.

The Bible is a supernatural book. There is an awful lot going on in the supernatural realm that we do not know about. And that's fine, we don't need to know about it. Or I should say, all we need to know about it is that Jesus defeated all supernatural evil creatures on the Cross when He died.

Isa 34:16 "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.

Every prophecy of the Lord will be fulfilled. Only He can talk about the future in the past tense.

It's interesting to think of God the Holy Spirit as the One who gathers, i.e., arrests and incarcerates, these demonic forces. It's not what we normally think of Him doing, is it?

Isa 34:17 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."

"Casting the lot" and "dividing" was the method God employed when He originally apportioned the Promised Land to the various tribes. The Jews did not think of it as a chance rolling of the dice. God made His will known to Israel through it.

It's not how we discover God's will today. You'll never hear at our Board Meetings, "*Come on, come on, papa needs a new building!*" as we toss the dice.

Not "forever," but for the length of the Kingdom of God on Earth, Edom will be the habitation of the night-monster & her evil groupies.

I'd like to explain something about the thousand year kingdom, the Millennium, the Kingdom of God on Earth. When Jesus returns, there will be multitudes of humans who have survived the horrors of the Tribulation. At some point before the thousand years begins, the Lord will separate *believers* and *unbelievers*. The scene can be found at the end of Matthew twenty-five. It is famously referred to as the Sheep & Goat Judgment:

- The survivors of the nations who helped Israel during the Tribulation - believers - are the sheep.
- The survivors of the nations who persecuted Israel during the Tribulation - unbelievers - are the goats.

To the sheep, the Lord says, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

BTW: You probably know people who say that the resurrection & rapture occur *after* the Tribulation, i.e., post-tribulation. They see it as simultaneous with the Second Coming. One insurmountable difficulty with the postTrib rapture is that there would be no believing Gentile human beings on Earth to go into the Kingdom.

The Millennium must begin with saved mortal humans. As they reproduce, their children are born with a sin nature, needing to be saved by believing in Jesus. It almost defies comprehension, but multitudes of these will reject salvation. They join with Satan at the end of the thousand years in a final rebellion against God. The rebellion will be short-lived. "They came up across the breadth of the Earth and surrounded the encampment of the saints, the beloved city. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:19-20).

Next, the unbelieving dead, from all of time, will be raised to stand before the Great White Throne of God to determine the degrees of their punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Never in my lifetime have so many End Times prophecies seemed as 'fulfillable' as they are today:

- Israel is back in her land.
- The Jews are ready *right now* to reinstate the ministries of the Temple. They wouldn't need a full blown temple. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was only 15 feet wide by 45 feet long, and it was a tent.
- Global tyrannical government is the desire of many.
- A cashless, global economy accessed by hand or head could become universal anytime.
- Artificial Intelligence is expanding knowledge exponentially.

- AI could certainly power the image of antichrist that is predicted to have "life."

The stage is being set for the Tribulation.

The question is, Will you be on the stage? Or will you be in Heaven, the audience, having been raptured?

The Eight Stages of the Campaign of Armageddon

Based on the work of: Fruchtenbaum, Hindson, Ice, LaHaye, Et al.

1. The gathering of all the world's armies at Armageddon. Joel 3:9-11; Psalm 2:1-6; Revelation 16:12-16
2. God destroys Babylon, Antichrist's capital. Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51; Zechariah 5:5-11; Rev. 17-18
3. Jerusalem is attacked, and half the city falls. Micah 4:11-5:1; Zechariah 12-14
4. The armies of the Antichrist attack the Jews hidden in Petra/Bozrah. Jeremiah 49:13-14; Micah 2:12
5. Israel is regenerated and accepts Jesus as their Messiah. Psalm 79:1-13; 80:1-19; Isaiah 64:1-12; Hosea 6:1-13; Joel 2:28-32; Zechariah 12:10; 13:7-9; Romans 11:25-27
6. Jesus rescues redeemed Israel hidden away at Petra/Bozrah. (Not the Mt of Olives - Acts 1:10-11) Isaiah 34:1-7; 63:1-6; Habakkuk 3:3; Micah 2:12-1
7. The armies of the world are destroyed from Petra/Bozrah to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Jeremiah 49:20-22; Zechariah 14:12-15; Joel 3:12-13, 2Thessalonians 2:8, Isaiah 14:3-11, 16-21
8. The victory ascent by Jesus up the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14:3-5; Joel 3:14-17; Matthew 24:29-31, Revelation 16:17-21; 19:11-21