

The Prophecy of Isaiah  
**The Desert**

There will be Judgment and there will be Blessing.  
God is merciful but He will judge evil.

A common misconception about God's judgment is that our so-called "good" will be weighed in a balance against our "bad" and if our "good" outweighs our "bad" we will escape punishment.

What is wrong with this view?

Isaiah foresaw a time of universal judgment followed by blessing for the people of God. As before this is an eschatological passage.

Is this a millennial reign of Christ on this earth or is it after the return of Christ at the end of this present age into eternity.

**God's Wrath on the Wicked**

The prophet uses Edom as an example of the calamity and judgment that will befall all of the nations and peoples who have rebelled against the Lord.

**The Slaughter of the Nations**

**Isaiah 34:1-4**

Isaiah summons the nations to come and hear and heed the warning. He envisions the nations as being within the sound of his voice.

God's righteous wrath is called "slaughter." This is a word that describes the killing of an animal being sacrificed on an altar. After it is slain the animal is completely consumed by fire.

Judgment will be so awful that it is difficult to express it in human terms.

**Rev 19:11-21**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, <sup>18</sup> to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." <sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. <sup>20</sup> And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. <sup>21</sup> And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. ESV

The wrath of God is not a popular subject and it is rarely the subject of a sermon, even in sovereign grace churches. The wrath of God and sin and guilt are never a subject for the "prosperity gospel" and the "health and wealth" churches.

Too often the love of God is presented without any responsibility to obey God's word in a refraction of God's love.

God's love is only understood through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1 John 4:7-12

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

## The Slaughter of Edom

## Isaiah 34:5-17

Beginning at verse 5 the focus of God's judgment is on Edom. The people of this nation were descended from Esau, Jacob's twin brother. For centuries fierce enmity has existed between the people of Edom and the people of Israel.

The context here is not Edom alone, but symbolizes all of the enemies of God that will be judged at the end of time. The language applies to all the godless nations and peoples in the time of judgment.

The image of sacrifices compares the way the priests slaughtered the animals with God's "sword" of judgment. Bozrah was a prominent sheepherding center in Edom. This is the same place that the symbolic battle of Armageddon occurs. [5-6]

My eschatology interprets Armageddon as an ageless war between good and evil rather than a specific battle at a future time.

Depending on which translation you have, "wild oxen," "bull calves," or "great bulls" are metaphors for the soldiers of this evil nation. There will be no escape and the land will be drenched with blood. [7]

"Zion" refers to the city of Jerusalem. Zion is first mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:7 as a Jebusite fortress hill. [8]

### 2 Sam 5:6-10

<sup>6</sup> And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off"—thinking, "David cannot come in here." <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. <sup>8</sup> And David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack 'the lame and the blind,' who are hated by David's soul." Therefore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." <sup>9</sup> And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. <sup>10</sup> And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

Isaiah uses "Zion" to refer to God's people.

I found 161 uses of "Zion" in the Bible; one example:

### Heb 12:22-24

<sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Edom will become a perpetual desert wasteland, never again to be inhabited by humans. The only thing that lives in this desolate land will be wild animals and birds that are not normally found where people live. [8-15]

Isaiah issues a call for future generations to “seek and read from the book of the Lord.” The context is verses 1-15 but the application is to all generations and is true of all prophecy. [16-17]

### **God’s blessing of the Redeemed**

Typically in Isaiah gloom of judgment is followed by promises of blessing that the redeemed of the Lord will enjoy.

### **The Land and the People are Transformed      Isaiah 35:1-7**

The Lord will bring gladness and new life out of barrenness. Unlike Edom [the evil nations], burned and desolate, God will restore the Promised Land and make it inhabitable. [1]

Isaiah personifies the parched desert land making it glad with the wilderness shouting for joy. [2]

In Isaiah’s day, the Plain of Sharon and the areas of Mount Carmel and Mount Lebanon were known for their beauty and lush vegetation. Isaiah says that the once dry land will become as glorious and splendid as those lands. [2]

We are encouraged to strengthen each other. Remind the fearful that the Redeemer is coming one day to judge those who have oppressed them. [3-4]

In that great Day the Deliverer will come and remove all disabilities. When Christ came the first time He performed many acts of physical healing. When Christ returns at the end of this present age He will heal all infirmities. [5-6]

The “burning sand” will become a pool, and the “thirsty ground” will become bubbling springs. [7]

Isaiah describes a “highway” called the “Way of Holiness” that Messiah will lay across the desert. He variously describes the Way and the Travelers on it.

The traffic on the Highway will be free from evils and dangers. The “unclean” and “wicked fools” are not allowed on this road. These are the people who have not followed God’s way of life. At the end of time, having had no interest in God’s holiness, will not travel on this road of holiness. [8-9]

Verse 10 tells us what lies at the end of the Way of Holiness and what the travelers will be doing. The road leads to Zion or New Jerusalem.

Rev 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

### **Are you looking forward to the Day of Judgment?**

We can do nothing in and of ourselves to be ready for the Day of Judgment. Our confidence must be based solely in the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us by grace through faith alone.

Have you repented of your sin and guilt and placed all your hope in Jesus Christ for salvation and justification?