

**Lesson 20**  
**Isaiah 34-35**  
**FUTURE SHOCK AND FUTURE GLORY (Part 2)**

**Memory verse:** “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?” (Romans 8:24 NIV)

Chapter 34 to 35 is the section which concludes the major section of Isaiah that deals with God's sovereignty over the nations of the world (chapters 13 to 35). Here the lessons stand out clearly. Pride leads to humiliation, whereas trust in the Lord results in exaltation (cf. Matt. 23:12). Chapters 34 to 35 bring to a head the chapters of 28 to 33, just as chapters 24 to 27 topped off chapters 13 to 23.

"These two chapters form a fitting climax to the judgment and salvation motifs which have been spoken of extensively by Isaiah. . . . Discussion of the judgment on Assyria (30:27-33; 31:8-9; 33:1, 18-19) naturally led to a discussion of God's judgment on the whole world in the Tribulation. God's vengeance on the world will be followed by millennial blessing on His covenant people, Israel." J. Martin

These themes of judgment and blessing, of course, were prominent in the sixth "woe," so there is a strong connection with what precedes in chapter 33. Chapters 34 and 35 present the contrasting images of a productive land turned into a desert (Chapter 34), and a desert turned into a garden (chapter 35).

"To align oneself with the nations of the earth is to choose a desert; to trust in God is to choose a garden." Oswalt.

In the immediate context, Isaiah continues the thought of the coming judgment against the Assyrians. But in the larger context, we can see this passage as an announcement of the judgment to come upon the nations during the Great Tribulation.

Jesus, and many Old Testament prophets, plainly told us of a coming time He called great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), when because of the judgment of God, conditions on earth would be the worst human history had ever seen. Revelation chapters 6, 8-9, and 16-18 describe this horrific time, when there will be widespread ecological, economic, cosmic, and human catastrophe on a level never before known in history. In light of how terrible the great tribulation will be, when we consider how prophecy has been fulfilled, and how the stage is set for even more fulfilled prophecy, we should “listen; pay attention (Isaiah 34:1 NIV)”!

In contrast to chapter 34, chapter 35 is full of joy and rejoicing. There God turned the world into a desert; here He transforms that desert into a garden. The order of events is significant because they rule out postmillennialism, which teaches that the world will get increasingly better—until the utopia (Millennium) described in this chapter comes about - following which Messiah will return to the earth. Genesis 12:3, one of the original promises to Abraham, even suggests the order explained in Isaiah 34 and 35: cursing followed by blessing, both on a universal scale.

After the judgment on the nations described in Isaiah 34, God will bring a beautiful restoration. This was true in the immediate term, when Judah was restored after the invasion of the Assyrians was turned back. It is true in the longer term, when modern day Israel has turned the wilderness and the wasteland into productive farms, and truly has made “the wilderness will rejoice and blossom” (Isaiah 35:1 NIV). It will be true in the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy, when God restores the ecology of the world after the end of the great tribulation and the battle of Armageddon (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Isaiah then announces that in the ministry of the Messiah, there will be a wonderful highway, a road, known as the Way of Holiness. Are you on that Highway? Are you making progress on it? Are you enjoying the travel? Are you inviting others to join you?

Scripture reading: Isaiah Chapter 34:1-15; Isaiah 35:8-10

Things to learn: 1) A period of Cursing 2) A period of Blessing 3) The Way of Holiness

**Discussion Questions:**

Q1. Explain the reasons and the impact of God's judgment on all nations in chapter 34.

Q2. The context of Chapter 35 seemingly points to a fulfillment in the future. How would you explain that?

Q3. Using chapter 34 and 35, share how will you be affected personally.