

ISAIAH LESSON 30
Surging with Joy – Homeward Bound^a
(Isaiah 34:1-35:10)

Isaiah 34:1-35:10 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Judgment on the Nations

34 Draw near, O nations, to hear,
and hearken, O peoples!
Let the earth listen, and all that fills it^b;
the world, and all that comes from it.^c
²For the Lord^d is enraged against all the nations,
and furious against all their host,
he has doomed them^e, has given them over for slaughter.^f
³Their slain shall be cast out,
and the stench of their corpses shall rise;
the mountains shall flow^g with their blood.^h
⁴Allⁱ the host of heaven^j shall rot^k away,
and the skies roll up like a scroll.
All their host shall fall,
as leaves fall from the vine,
like leaves falling from the fig tree.^l
⁵For my sword has drunk its fill^m in the heavens;
behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom,
upon the people I have doomed.ⁿ
⁶The Lord has a sword; it is sated with blood,
it is gorged^o 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,
a great slaughter in the land of Edom.^p
⁷Wild oxen shall fall^q with them,
and young steers with the mighty bulls.
Their land shall be soaked with blood^r,
and their soil made rich with fat.^s
⁸For the Lord has a day of vengeance,
a year of recompense for the cause^t of Zion.^u
⁹And the streams of Edom^v shall be turned into pitch,
and her soil into brimstone;
her land shall become burning pitch.^w
¹⁰Night and day it shall not be quenched;
its smoke shall go up for ever.
From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
none shall pass through it for ever and ever.^x
¹¹But the hawk^y and the porcupine^z shall possess it,
the owl^{aa} and the raven shall dwell in it.

He shall stretch the line of confusion over it,
 and the plummet of chaos over^{bb} its nobles.^{cc}
¹²They shall name it No Kingdom There,
 and all its princes shall be nothing.^{dd}
¹³Thorns shall grow over its strongholds,
 nettles and thistles in its fortresses.
 It shall be the haunt of jackals,
 an abode^{ee} for ostriches^{ff, gg}
¹⁴And wild beasts shall meet with hyenas^{hh},
 the satyrⁱⁱ shall cry to his fellow;
 yea, there shall the night hag^{jj} alight,
 and find for herself a resting place.^{kk}
¹⁵There shall the owl^{ll} nest and lay
 and hatch and gather her young in her shadow^{mmm};
 yea, there shall the kitesⁿⁿ be gathered,
 each one with her mate.^{oo}
¹⁶Seek and read from the book of the Lord:
 Not one of these shall be missing;
 none shall be without her mate.
 For the^{pp} mouth of the Lord has commanded,
 and his Spirit^{qq} has gathered them.^{rr}
¹⁷He has cast the lot for them,
 his hand has portioned it out to them with the line;
 they shall possess it for ever,
 from generation to generation they shall dwell in it.^{ss}

Government with Justice Predicted

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
 the desert^{tt} shall rejoice and blossom;
 like the crocus^{uu} ² it shall blossom abundantly,
 and rejoice with joy and singing.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the Lord,
 the majesty of our God^{vv, ww}.
³Strengthen the weak hands^{xx},
 and make firm the feeble knees^{yy, zz}.
⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
 "Be strong, fear not!
 Behold, your God
 will come with vengeance,
 with the recompense of God.
 He will come and save you."^{aaa}
⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
 and the ears of the deaf unstopped;^{bbb}
⁶then shall the lame man leap like a hart,
 and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
 and streams in the desert;^{ccc}
 7 the burning sand^{ddd} shall become a pool,
 and the thirsty ground springs of water;
 the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,^{eee}
 the grass shall become reeds and rushes.^{fff}
 8 And a highway shall be there,
 and it shall be called the Holy Way;
 the unclean shall not pass over it,^{ggg}
 and fools shall not err therein^{hhh iii}.
 9 No lion shall be there,
 nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
 they shall not be found there,
 but the redeemed shall walk there.^{jjj}
 10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
 and come to Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain^{kkk} joy and gladness,
 and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.^{lll}

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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1. Many scholars assert that Chapters 34 and 35 were written and/or incorporated into the canonical much later than the time of Isaiah, perhaps during the Babylonian Captivity or even after the return to the Land. If that were true, how would that change our interpretation of these chapters, and particularly their usefulness in our lives today?

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^a **Chapters 34 and 35** form a small collection, sometimes called the Little Apocalypse, which looks forward to the vindication of Zion, first by defeat of its enemies and judgment upon the nations similar to Is 13:1-22 with Edom substituting for Babylon (Chapter 34), then by its restoration (Chapter 35). It is similar in style and meaning to Chapters 24-27 (the Apocalypse of Isaiah) and reflects many of the themes of other parts of Isaiah. **Chapter 35**, in particular, contains a number of themes similar to those in Chapters 40-55, for example, the blossoming of the wilderness (vv. 1-2; cf. 41:18-19), which is now well-irrigated (v. 7; cf. 43:19-20); sight to the blind (vv. 5-6; cf. 42:7, 16); a highway in the wilderness (v. 8; cf. 41:3); and the return of the redeemed/ransomed to Zion (vv. 9-10; cf. 51:11). Nevertheless, Chapter 35 forms a unit with Chapter 34 and also reflects, along with that chapter, themes found in Chapters 1-33. It thus forms a bridge between the first major section of Isaiah dealing with a King (1-33) and the second major section dealing with a servant (40-55).

^b “**All that fills it**” (וּמְלֵאָהּ, *melo*) meaning literally “its fullness”.

^c **(34:1)** Although it would be God’s people who would read this prophecy in the first instance (Is 1:2), God calls all the **nations** (גוֹיִם, *goyim*, also in verse 2) of the inhabited world (עַרְוֵי, *erets*), all men and women, including those who do not worship or acknowledge Him (Is 33:13, 41:1, 43:9, 45:20; Ps 49:1), Creation (תְּבֵלָה, *Tebel*; Is 6:3, 42:5; Dt 4:26, 32:1; Ps 24:1 Mt 3:9) and every living thing, to listen (Is 28:23) to the words of this judgement (Gn 6:3; Jl 3:1-2; Mi 1:2). The universality of this prophecy indicates that it refers to God’s final judgment upon the nations which will come before the Messianic Kingdom. It is not clear whether this judgment will be carried out, like the judgment upon the people of Israel and Judah, through other nations such as

Assyria (Is 10:5) and Babylon (Jr 25:9, 27:6, 43:10), or through more direct action such as floods, earthquakes or the blotting out of the sun (Is 13:10, 29:6; Gn 6:5-7; Jr 4:24; Mk 13:24-25; Rv 8:5). If the former case, the end would look much like a battle of all against all (Is 13:5; Ps 2:2; Jr 25:32-34; Dn 2:44; Mk 13:12-13; Rv 16:14) in which the warring nations do God's will for destruction. In the latter case it would mark a sharp departure in the behavior of Creation itself. In either case, that God is ultimately the agent of Judgment will be apparent to those with ears to hear and eyes to see (Is 66:14; Mk 13:26-27). The LXX reads, "Draw near, you nations (**ἔθνος**, *ethnos*); and hearken, you princes (**ἄρχων**, *archón*); let the earth hear, and they that are in it; the world (**οἰκέω**, *oikeó*), and the people (**λαός**, *laos*) therein."

^d **Yahweh**, or **Jehovah** (**יהוה**, **YHWH**), written with assumed vowel markings, is the proper name of God when pronounced and usually translated as **Lord**. See Note in the Introduction to this Study. **YHWH** appears here and in 34:6 (twice), 8, and 16 (twice) and 35:2 and 10.

^e **Doomed them** or in some translations, "utterly destroyed them" (**חָרַם**, *charam*) literally meaning "put them under a ban" or "set apart" or "devoted" to the Lord for **slaughter** (**טָבַח**, *tebach*), especially in the context of slaughtering meat or a ritual sacrifice. **חָרַם** also appears in a similar context in verse 5 and **טָבַח** in verse 6. The Greek used for slaughter in the LXX (**σφαγή**, *sphagḗ*) has the same implication of meat preparation or sacrifice though the Greek translating **חָרַם** does not carry the idea of being devoted to God which is present in the Hebrew.

^f **(34:2)** God is angry at all nations (Is 10:25, 63:6), including Judah (Is 43:28, 65:12), and there will come a day when He will impose judgment (Is 11:5, 13:6, 61:2) for sin (Is 66:12; Zec 5:3) upon all of them (Is 24:1; Jsh 6:21; 1Sm 15:3). The destruction will be so great that few can survive it (Is 24:6, 66:14; Jr 10:10, 50:13) and the redeemed are urged to hide from it (Is 26:20). The implication of the verse is first that this decision to bring destruction on the nations is irrevocable (Is 66:12; Am 1:11) and that the destruction visited on these nations "set apart" or "put under a ban" (Jsh 6:17) will be a sacrifice to the Lord (Ezk 39:17-20, 39:17-20), or at least a fulfillment of the Lord's purposes. This contrasts with Paul's direction immediately following his discussion of the restoration of the Jewish people (Rm 11:25-36), to make ourselves "living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" in which our sin will be taken away and our lives preserved for service to God (Rm 12:1).

^g **Shall flow** or in some translations, "drenched with" (**מָסַס**, *masas*) literally means "melt" or "dissolve". The LXX (**βρέχω**, *brechó*) has the sense of being rained upon.

^h **(34:3)** In the Day of God's Judgment, there will be death and destruction (Is 5:25; 2Sm 1:22; Ezk 5:17, 14:19, 38:22, 39:1-17; Rv 19:17-19). The dead will simply pile up (Is 10:4, 14:19-21, 18:6, 66:24; Ps 110:6; Jl 2:20; Am 4:10) so that the living are not sufficient to bury the dead (Wis 8:11-13; Mt 8:22). And the Land, the mountains, will be covered with so much blood (Is 63:6; Ezk 35:6) that they will in some sense dissolve (Is 30:25; Ps 46:2-3; Ezk 32:3-4). This destruction of the Land itself is visited upon it because of Mankind's sin.

ⁱ **All** in the Masoretic is "And the valleys will be split, and all" in 1QIsa.

^j **Heaven** (**שָׁמַיִם**, *shamayim*) can mean, as in English, both the abode of God and the visible sky.

^k **Rot** (**מָאָה**, *maqah*).

^l **(34:4)** This verse describes God's war against spiritual darkness (Eph 6:10-18) and wickedness in the realms that transcend the human and earthly realms (Gn 3:15; Jb 1:6-12, 2:2-6; Col 2:13-15), and against the rebellious hosts of heaven (2Ki 21:3-5), here pictured as stars. The falling of stars from the Heavens is also pictured as the falling of leaves from a fig tree (Mt 21:19; Rv 6:12-14). Heaven and Earth will disintegrate at His command (Is 51:6; Ps 102:25-27), just as He once ordered them into existence (Is 13:9-10, 24:21-23, 51:6; 2Pt 3:10). The heavens will be rolled up like a scroll (Heb 1:11-12), never to be opened again (2Pt 3:10-12), with all the heavenly bodies being extinguished (Is 13:10-13, 24:21-23; Jb 9:7; Ezk 32:7-8; Jl 2:32, 3:15; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24-25; Ac 2:20; Rv 8:12).

^m **Sword has drunk its fill** in the Masoretic text reads "sword will appear" in 1QIsa.

ⁿ **(34:5)** Having described the final judgment on all nations in the first four verses, Isaiah now provides an example of what that judgment looked like in a specific case. The "hard and great strong sword" (Is 27:1, 30:32) of the Lord's wrath is personified as a man drunk with fury (Dt 32:41-43). When, after God's sword has drunk its fill (Jr 46:10, 47:6) by dealing with the heavenly hosts, it descends for judgment. It will execute the total destruction once declared on Jericho (Jsh 6:21-24; Dt 32:41) upon Edom (Jr 49:7-22; Lam 4:21-22; Ezk 25:12-14, 35:1-15; Jl 3:19). The people of **Edom** are the descendants of Esau (Heb 12:16), Jacob's brother and a symbol of continuous hostility to God's people (Ps 137:7; Jr 49:7; Ezk 25:12-14; Am 1:11-12; Ob 1-21). Edom represents all the nations and people that have opposed God and oppressed His people (Is 63:1, 65:12; Jb 8:13). The story

of Jacob (Israel) and Esau is one used to show God's sovereignty and the election of Israel (Mal 1:1-4; Rm 9:6-14). Edom refused the Israelites passage into the Land at the end of the Exodus (Nu 20:14-21). King David conquered Edom and set up garrisons there (2Sm 8:13-14). Edom would periodically invade or attack Judah (2Ch 28:17). At the time of the Fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile in 587 B.C. the people of Edom were particularly hostile to the Kingdom of Judah and took advantage of its misfortunes (Is 63:1-6; Ps 137:7; Ob 8-14). By the time of the return from Exile in Babylon, Edom has disappeared from the Biblical and historical record. The LXX reads, "My sword has been made drunk in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and with judgment upon the people doomed to destruction."

^o **Gorged with fat** or in some translations, "sated with fat" (דָּשְׁנָה, *dashen*) literally "made fat" also in verse 7 translated as "become rich with fat" or in some translations, "become greasy with fat" (Is 25:6). The Hebrew of verse 6 is emphatic by also using a second word for fat (חֵלֶב, *cheleb*) so that it literally says "made fat with fatness".

^p (34:6) God's judgement is compared with the bloody (2Sm 1:22) slaughter of sacrificial animals (Is 30:33; Lv 3:4-9; Jr 25:34, 46:10, 51:40; Ezk 39:17-20; Zep 1:7-9; Rv 19:17). **Bozrah** is the chief city of Edom south of the Dead Sea (Gn 36:33; Jr 49:12-13, 49:22).

^q **Fall** (יָרַד, *yarad*) literally "go down".

^r **Soaked** (רָוַח, *ravah*) **with blood** or more literally "drink its fill of blood".

^s (34:7) **Wild oxen and steers** will be killed along with the sacrificial animals of the previous verse. Wild game and a neutered animal would not be an acceptable sacrifice under the Levitical system. Yet the language of **blood and fat** (2Sm 1:22) recalls the act of sacrifice. Wild oxen (רֵאֵם, *reem*, also sometimes translated as "unicorn" or "great aurochs" a now extinct species of wild bulls; Nu 23:22; Ps 22:21) and young bulls (פָּר, *par*, also translated steer or bullock; Ps 22:12, 68:30; Jr 50:27) may metaphorically refer to older, senior men (Zep 1:7-9; Zec 13:7) as well as the younger men among the Edomites, indicating, through the merism, that all of the men of Idom will be killed, and none will survive. The very land itself will be covered with blood (Is 63:6) implying damage to the Creation itself. The LXX reads, "And the mighty ones shall fall with them, and the rams and the bulls; and the land shall be soaked with blood, and shall be filled with their fat."

^t "cause" () or "controversy".

^u (34:8) Is 1:24, 2:12, 13:6, 13:9, 15:6, 24:6-10, 27:1, 34:8-17, 35:4, 38:12, 43:28, 47:1-3, 59:18, 61:2, 63:4; Dt 13:14-15; 2Ki 17:16, 23:4-5; Ps 137:7; Ezk 21:3-5, 25:12-17; Jl 3:3-4; Am 1:6-10, 3:14-15, 6:11; Heb 10:31). The extreme hostility against Edom in this passage is reflected in a number of other prophetic texts from the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. (cf. e.g., 63:1-6; Jer 49:7-22; Ez 25:12-14). The animus was probably prompted by Edomite infiltration of the southern territories of Judah, especially after the Babylonian conquest of Judah. The Day of Vengeance is the day fixed by God when the wicked, and in particular those who have attacked Israel and Judah, will receive the reward of their deeds (Is 2:12). God's vengeance is not like the vengeance of men who seek merely to "get even" with an enemy. Rather He acts as a judge imposing a just penalty for wrong-doing (Is 35:4; Ezk 25:14-17; Ps 94:1) and acting to vindicate His people. The Believers' punishment is remitted because Jesus the Messiah suffered the punishment for us. The Lord, who will do anything, even die, for the sake of His people (Mk 10:45) will judge Edom for its sin and its enmity toward Judah.

^v Edom, in Hebrew () "her streams".

^w (34:9) Is 30:33; Gn 19:24-28; Dt 29:23; Ps 11:6; Ezk 38:22; Rv 14:10-11, 19:3. Pitch and Sulfur recall the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jr 40:17-18) showing that the destruction to be visited upon Edom will be as severe, and permanent as that visited upon Sodom. The LXX for verses 9-11 read, "And her valleys shall be turned into pitch, and her land into sulphur; and her land shall be as pitch burning night and day; and it shall never be quenched, and her smoke shall go up; it shall be made desolate throughout her generations, and for a long time birds and hedgehogs, and ibises and ravens shall dwell in it; and the measuring line of desolation shall be cast over it, and satyrs shall dwell in it."

^x (34:10) Is 1:31, 13:20-22, 24:1, 34:10-15, 66:24; Jr 49:18; Ezk 29:11-12, 35:3; Mal 1:3-4; Rv 14:10-11, 18:8, 19:3. God's wrath toward Edom will go on forever.

^y "Hawk", "eagle owl", jackdaw" or "pelican" (), the identities of the species referred to in this verse being uncertain.

^z "Porcupine" () sometimes translated as "heron".

^{aa} "Owl" () possibly the "great horned owl".

^{bb} Hebrew lacks “over”

^{cc} (34:11) Is 13:19-22, 14:23, 21:11, 24:10, 28:17; Gn 8:7; Lv 11:16-18; Dt 14:15-17; 2Ki 21:13; Lm 2:8; Ezk 35:15; Jl 3:19; Ob 1:1; Am 7:7-9; Zep 2:14; Mal 1:4; Rv 18:2. Edom will be so desolate that it will be occupied only by these exotic birds. The Hebrew of the second half of the verse recalls Gn 1:2 describing the Earth before God gave it order. Plumb line = stones of void? Chaos...confusion: *tohu...bohu* in Hebrew, the terms used to describe the primeval chaos in Gn 1:2. Look at Hebrew for Chaos/Confusion etc. There is a sense in which this is a reversal of creation, returning the Earth to its earliest form (Jr 4:23). A plumb line is a construction and survey tool used here metaphorically as a way to measure Edom’s evil.

^{dd} (34:12) Is 29:20, 40:23, 41:11-12; Jb 12:21; Ps 107:40; Jr 21:7, 27:20, 39:6; Ezk 24:5; Ob 18; Rv 18:2. Edom has traditionally elected its leaders, but now there is no one left to be put in that position (see Isaiah passage re no one wants to take a leadership job). Edom will also cease to exist as a nation. The LXX reads, “Her princes shall be no more, for her kings and her great men shall be destroyed.”

^{ee} “Abode” in 1QIsa, LXX (Septuagint), Syr (Syriac), and Tg (Targum, an Aramaic version of the Hebrew Scriptures) is “grass” in the Masoretic text.??

^{ff} “Ostriches” () could also mean owls.

^{gg} (34:13) Isa 5:6, 7:19, 13:21-22, 25:2, 32:13; Lv 11:16-18; Ps 44:19; Jr 9:11, 10:22; Hos 9:6; Mal 1:3. Wild plants, thorns and thistles, will take over the structures, and the land will become a place where only animals live.

^{hh} “Hyenas” or “wolves” () literally “howling creatures”.

ⁱⁱ “Satyr” or “hairy goat” () perhaps signifying “demon”.

^{jj} “Night Hag” or “night monster” (). Lilith (/ˈlɪlɪθ/; Hebrew: לִילִית *Lilīṭ*) is a figure in Jewish mythology, developed earliest in the Babylonian Talmud (3rd to 5th centuries) coming to be identified as Adam’s “first wife”. Lilith is a dangerous demon of the night, who is sexually wanton, and who steals babies in the darkness.[1] The character is generally thought to derive in part from a historically far earlier class of female demons (*lilītu*) in ancient Mesopotamian religion, found in cuneiform texts of Sumer, the Akkadian Empire, Assyria, and Babylonia. The *lilith*: a female demon thought to roam about the desert.

^{kk} (34:14) Is 13:21-22, 30:8; Lv 17:7; Ps 74:14; Rv 18:2. Satyrs: see note on 13:21 (NABRE). Not only will Edom be an abode of animals, it will also become home to various kinds of demons and monsters. The LXX reads, “And demons shall meet with satyrs, and they shall cry one to the other; there shall the satyrs rest, having found for themselves a place of rest.”

^{ll} “Owl” or “sand partridges” () also translated as “arrow snakes” or tree snakes. LXX reads “hedgehogs”.

^{mmm} “Shadow” or “protection” () literally shade, a precious thing in the desert.

ⁿⁿ “Kites” () sometimes translated as “hawks”.

^{oo} (34:15) Dt 14:13; Ps 17:8; Mt 24:28. Edom shall become a permanent home for animals, monsters and demons who will settle down and perpetuate themselves by having young. The LXX reads, “There has the hedgehog made its nest, and the earth has safely preserved its young; there have the deer met, and seen one another’s faces.”

^{pp} “The” ()??

^{qq} **Ruach** (רוּחַ) usually translated as **Spirit**, can mean Spirit, wind or breath. See note in the Introduction to this Study.

^{rr} (34:16) Is 1:20, 8:16, 30:8, 40:5, 40:26, 48:13, 58:14; Ps 40:7, 139:16; Dn 7:10. There are a number of suggestions about what is referred to as the Book of the Lord: (1) a list of God’s creatures; cf. Ex 32:32–33; Ps 69:29, “the book of the living”; Ps 139:16, “your book.” (2) Isaiah’s prophecies, some of which God orders written down (), that will be proved true, i.e. “find their mate” (3) The Scriptures or God’s Word or some specified part of it; or (4) The Book of Life with the names of the Redeemed (Ex 32:33; Ps 69:28, 139:16; Dn 12:1; Ezk 9:4; Mal 3:16; Phil 4:3; 2Tm 2:19; Rv 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27, 22:19). The evidence for any of them is unclear, however, and it may refer to something entirely different. But it does appear that the Book contains God’s judgments, and that they will be carried out in their time. In the context of verses 11-17, all of which refer to Edom becoming a home for beasts, monsters and demons who will make nests, select mates and have young, it is likely that the majority of the verse refers to this process, that each of these beasts will make its way to Edom and find its mate through the Lord’s command and the guidance of the Spirit. Given the overall context, the Book of the Lord is something in which is written

the judgment upon Edom which will be fulfilled. The Westminster Larger Catechism (1647) states, in answer to question 156, “. . . ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE ARE BOUND TO READ [the Word of God] APART BY THEMSELVES [Is 34:16], AND WITH THEIR FAMILIES; TO WHICH END, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE TO BE TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL INTO THE LANGUAGE OF EVERY PEOPLE UNTO WHOM THEY COME.” The LXX reads, “They passed by in full number, and not one of them perished; they sought not one another; for the Lord commanded them, and His Spirit gathered them.”

^{ss} (34:17) Is 17:13-14, 34:10-11; Nu 24:18; Jsh 14:2, 18:10; Ps 78:55; Jr 13:25. After having destroyed or driven out the Edomites, God will distribute the land to the beasts, its new inhabitants. Casts the lot...measures off: an ironic reference to how land might be distributed to new possessors (cf. Jos 14–21; Mi 2:5). The LXX reads, “And He shall cast lots for them, and His hand has portioned out their pasture, saying, You shall inherit the land forever; they shall rest on it throughout all generations.”

^{tt} “Desert” (), in some translations “Arabah” is one of three instances of synonyms for desert in this verse?? Same word at the end of verse 6.

^{uu} (35:1) Is 2:1, 6:11, 7:21-25, 27:6-10, 32:15-16, 40:29-32, 41:18-19, 51:3, 55:12-13; Song 2:1; Jsh 3:16; Ps 65:12. Crocus () is also translated meadow saffron, wildflower or rose?? The crocus is a flower that springs up in the spring or after a rain. The Land itself will join in the celebration of God’s redemption (Rm 8:19-22).

^{vv} *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) is the plural form of the generic El (אֱל), meaning god. Although it is occasionally used to mean gods, it is overwhelming translated as **God**, meaning the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the Septuagint it is typically translated as *theos* (θεός) meaning Lord or Master. Some have suggested that the use of the plural form for God is a prefiguring of the concept of the Trinity. It appears here and in 35:4.

^{ww} (35:2) Is 2:10, 2:19-21, 4:5, 7:5, 12:6, 25:9, 27:6, 32:5, 32:15, 33:9, 35:9-10, 40:5, 44:23, 51:11, 52:9, 53:2, 55:12-13, 59:19, 60:13, 63:1, 65:10, 66:10-14; Gn 21:6; Ex 16:7-10; Lv 9:6, 9:23; Nu 29:6; 1Ch 27:29; Song 2:1, 5:15, 7:5; Ps 45:3-4, 96:6, 104:1, 105:43, 145:5-12; Ezk 1:28, 3:23, 16:4; Ezr 3:7; Jn 1:14; Heb 12:12. The celebration of the Land itself is now extended to the coast reversing Is 33:9-10. The places listed in this verse are known for their fertility. The Glory of the Lord has a real presence among Israel and Judah (Ex 40:34-38; 1Ki 8:10-12; 2Ch 5:14, 7:1-3; Ezk 8:4, 10:18-19, 43:1-5). The LXX reads, “And the desert places of the Jordan shall blossom and rejoice; the glory of Lebanon has been given to it, and the honor of Carmel; and my people shall see the glory of the Lord, and the majesty of God.”

^{xx} “Weak hands” or “slack hands” () sometimes translated “exhausted”.

^{yy} “Weak knees” or “tottering knees” () sometimes translated as simply “feeble” or “weak”.

^{zz} (35:3) Is 40:1-2, 40:29-30; Jb 4:3-4; Zep 3:16; Zec 8:9-13; Heb 12:12. Strengthen yourself, and others, for the return to the Land.

^{aaa} (35:4) Is 1:24, 7:4, 21:4, 25:9, 32:4, 33:22, 34:8, 35:4, 40:2, 40:9-11, 41:10, 41:18-19, 43:20, 45:17, 47:3, 48:21, 51:5, 59:17-18, 61:2, 62:11, 63:4; Dt 20:3; Jos 1:9; 2Ch 32:6; Ps 94:1, 145:19; Dn 10:19; Hos 1:7; Zec 1:13, 8:13; Jn 4:1; Rv 22:12. Encourage the fainthearted for the return to the Land because you have confidence that the Lord will come and redeem you. The LXX reads, “Comfort one another, you fainthearted; be strong, fear not; behold, our God renders judgment, and He will render it; He will come and save us.”

^{bbb} (35:5) Is 29:18, 30:20-21, 32:3-4, 42:7, 42:16-18, 50:4; Ps 146:8; Mt 11:5; Jn 9:6-7; Ac 26:18. There will be healing for those who are disabled. This verse and part of verse 6 are quoted by Jesus when John the Baptist’s disciples come and ask if He is the One (Lk 7:22). By responding as He did, He claimed to be the Messiah.

^{ccc} (35:6) Is 32:3-4, 35:1, 41:18-19, 43:19-20, 44:3-4, 49:10, 51:3; Ex 4:11, 17:6; 2Sm 22:34; Ps 20:5; Mt 9:32-33, 11:5, 12:22, 15:30; Zep 3:19; Mt 9:32-35, 11:5, 15:30-31, 21:14; Mk 7:32-35, 9:25, 9:32-33; Lk 7:22, 11:14; Jn 5:8-9, 7:38-39; Ac 3:1-8, 8:7, 14:8-10. The lame will walk and the dumb will be able to speak. The dry places will now be a place of water and growing things.

^{ddd} “Burning sand” or “scorched land” () literally “mirage”?

^{eee} Swamp, Cn: Heb “in the haunt of jackals is her resting place”

^{fff} (35:7) Is 13:22, 34:13, 41:17, 44:3, 48:20-21, 49:10, 55:1, 58:11; Jb 8:11, 40:21; Ps 68:6, 107:35; Isa 41:17; 44:3; 55:1. The desert will become a place filled with lakes and streams, and rich with life. The place of the wild beast will become a rich land. This is the opposite of what will happen to Edom. The LXX reads, “And the dry land shall become pools, and a fountain of water

shall be poured into the thirsty land; there shall there be a joy of birds, ready habitations and marshes.” We do not think of marshes and swamps as rich land, but for the people of Judah, located in a desert, it would have had a different connotation.

^{egg} Heb: it and he is for them a wayfarer

^{hhh} “Fools shall not err therein” might also be rendered “if they are fools, they shall not wander in it.”

ⁱⁱⁱ (35:8) Isa 2:3, 4:3, 8:11, 11:6-12, 11:16, 19:23, 30:21, 33:8, 40:1-11, 41:17-19, 42:16, 42:24, 43:14-21, 48:17-21, 49:11, 51:10, 52:1, 57:14, 58:13, 62:10, 65:17-25; Ps 139:24; Jr 31:21; Mt 7:13-14; Jn 12:44, 14:6; 1Pt 1:15-16; Rv 21:27, 22:14-15. There will be a highway on which only the righteous will be able to travel. This is another image of the desert or wilderness becoming a garden, bringing the return of the exiles (Is 41:18, 42:15). It also recalls the imagery of the Exodus (Is 11:12-16, 51:9-10). Jesus told us that He is the way (Jn 14:5-6). The LXX reads, “There shall be there a pure way, and it shall be called a holy way; and there shall not pass by there any unclean person, neither shall there be there an unclean way; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray.”

ⁱⁱⁱ (35:9) Isa 5:29, 11:6, 13:22, 30:6, 34:14, 51:10-11, 62:10-12, 63:4; Ex 6:6; Lv 25:47-55, 26:6. Those who travel on this highway are safe from wild animals. Presence of ferocious beasts is a sign of God’s curse (Is 11:6-8, 65:25; Lv 26:22). In some mysterious way, the restoration of the Jewish people is inextricably bound together with the good news of salvation to the gentiles (Rm 9:1-12:1), and that each group will be, in some way, instrumental in the redemption of the other. In that way, God’s promise to Abraham will be fulfilled for all nations ().

^{kkk} “Obtain” or “find” () literally “overtake”.

ⁱⁱⁱ (35:10) Is 1:27, 20:29, 25:8-9, 30:19, 51:3, 51:11, 61:7, 62:12, 65:19, 66:14; Jb 19:25; Ps 4:7, 51:8, 126:5; Ps 126; Jn 16:22; Rm 9:2; Rv 7:9, 7:17; 21:1-4. This highway will allow the redeemed of the Lord to return to Land. They will come with joy and singing, and all sadness and grief will be forgotten. The LXX reads, “. . . and shall return, and come to Zion with joy, and everlasting joy shall be over their head; for on their head shall be praise and exaltation, and joy shall take possession of them; sorrow and pain, and groaning have fled away.”