

of fire that shall devour the adversaries" Heb. 10:26. Those disregarding Moses' Law "died without compassion"; how much more shall one suffer who spurns the new covenant. Heb. 10:28, 29.

14. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Heb. 10:31.
15. "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. 12:25, 26. "For our God is a consuming fire" Heb. 12:29.
16. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, blinded Elymas. Acts 13:8-12.
17. Herod was smitten by "an angel of the Lord" eaten of worms and died. Acts 12:22-24.
18. "Behold then, the goodness and severity of God" Rom. 11:22.
19. The devil, the beast, and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Rev. 20:10.
20. Anyone not written in the Book of Life is to be cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:15.

E. FREEDOM WILL FLOURISH, CHAPTER 35

1. STRENGTHENED

TEXT: 35:1-7

- 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.



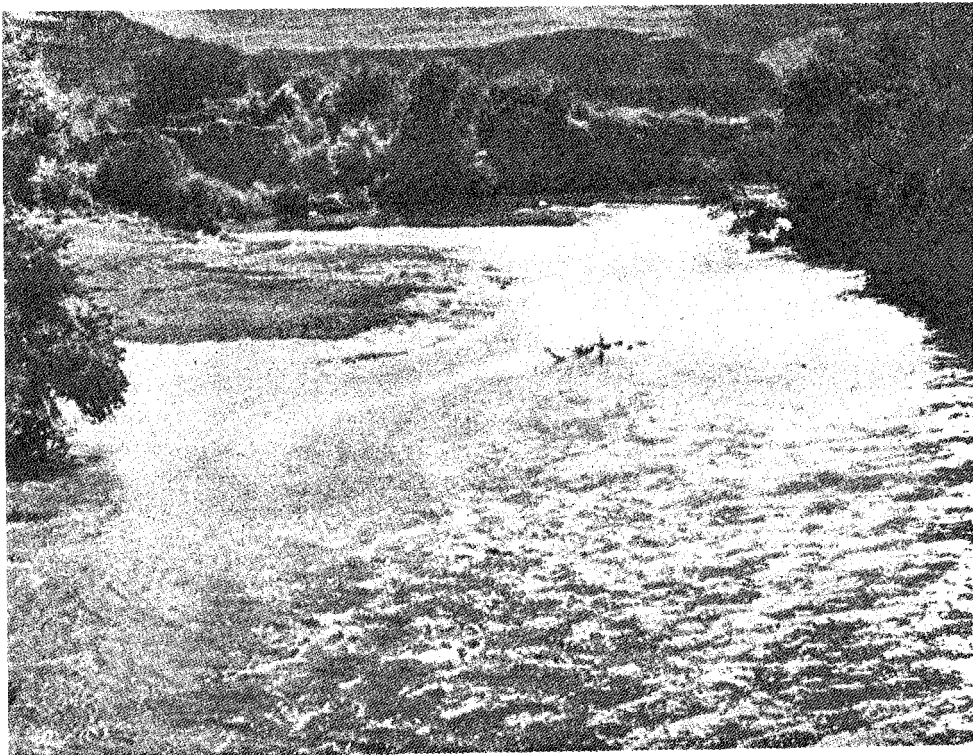
"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over" (Joshua 3: 1).

From their last camping ground on the "plains of Moab" the route taken by the Israelites lay across the Arabah (Deuteronomy 1: 7; 4: 49—*R.S.V.*) the name given in the Bible to this area north of the Dead Sea on either side of Jordan. It is a desolate expanse of limestone through which the Jordan has cut a gorge half a mile wide.

In the background, to the west of the depression, the hills of Judah rise above Jericho.

It was here "in the plains of Jericho" that the Babylonians later captured King Zedekiah of Judah when he fled from Jerusalem (Jeremiah 39: 5).

FROM: THE BIBLE AS HISTORY IN PICTURES
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"And the people passed over right against Jericho . . . and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:16-17).

Near Jericho the river is almost twenty feet deep and is fringed by a narrow, sub-tropical thicket, the "jungle of the Jordan", which at one time harboured lions (Zechariah 11:3-R.S.V.). It is on record that several times when the river has been in spate masses of marl have crashed down the banks and temporarily stopped up the channel. According to the Arab historian, al-Nuwairí, the river was completely dammed for ten hours on 8th December 1266 near the confluence of the Jabbok, a striking reminder of the biblical story. Similar occurrences have been reported in more recent times, as in October 1914, when the Jordan was blocked for twenty-four hours at the Jericho bridge.

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- 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God.
- 3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to them that 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.
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
- 6 Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
- 7 And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

QUERIES

- a. Why will the desert blossom and sing for joy?
- b. How shall the weak be strengthened?
- c. When will all the infirm be healed?

PARAPHRASE

While the glory of the God-opposing world empires will be changed to wastelands and desolations, the desolation of God's people is only temporary. Yes, their wastelands will someday be filled with gladness and their unproductiveness will be turned into beauty and fertility. There will be great joy and singing in that day. The majestic glory and beauty of Lebanon's mountains, the verdant lushness of Mount Carmel and the fertile productiveness of Sharon's plain will be faint comparison with the glory and excellency of the Lord which they shall enjoy in that day. On account of this promise let those of God

who are afraid be valiant and walk on in God's way with confidence. Tell those who are apprehensive to be courageous and strong. Your God is coming to destroy your enemies and save you. When He comes the blind will be made to see and the deaf made to hear. When he comes the crippled will be made as agile as the deer and those who cannot speak will be enabled to shout and sing. Refreshing and life-giving water will gush forth in the arid places and turn into running streams. That which is parched and dried up will be made into an oasis for the thirsty. Even that which normally would never be fertile and refreshing shall be so.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 SAVED: Chapter 35 stands in direct contrast to chapter 34. These two chapters conclude or summarize the two propositions of this section (28-35): (a) World governments cannot help God's people (especially Egypt) for they oppose God's sovereignty; (b) God will keep His promise to deliver from eternal destruction all who believe and trust Him.

This chapter finds its ultimate fulfillment in the messianic kingdom (the church). Just as the God-opposing world governments were defeated and judged at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (see comments ch. 34), so the great deliverance and productiveness portrayed in vivid landscape scenes refer to the same climactic event in history. It would seem evident to us that all the predictions of the prophets concerning the rejuvenated *land* of Israel or the restoration of the *people* of Israel to the land must either be fulfilled in a literal (though hyperbolic) way after the captivity, or in a spiritual sense in the establishment of the church—or both. We cannot abide the idea that the prophetic predictions concerning the land and the people will find their fulfillment in a literal restoration of the Jewish economy (dispensation) at some time future to the church.

a. So far as we are able to discover, the New Testament says

- nothing of literal, genetic Israel's reoccupation of Palestine and restoration of a Jewish system.
- b. Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple but He said nothing of its rebuilding for the restoration of a Jewish system.
 - c. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."
 - d. Paul told the Gentile Ephesians they were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the church.
 - e. Paul told the Gentile Galatians that all who were in Christ were heirs of Abraham and the *promise* made to Abraham.
 - f. To restore a Jewish system would invalidate the credibility, authenticity, finality and superiority of Christianity as revealed in the book of Hebrews.
 - g. To establish again the kingdom of Israel of the Old Testament would be to establish a kingdom conceived in disobedience, born in rebellion and perpetuated in apostasy. That is exactly what the O.T. kingdom of Israel was.

Matthew Henry says, "Under the Gospel the desert land of heathenism becomes blooming. The flourishing desert shall have the glory of Lebanon given to it, which consisted in the strength and stateliness of its cedars; and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, which consisted in corn and cattle. All the beauty of the Jewish economy passed into the Christian and appeared in its perfection, as the apostle shows in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whatever is valuable in any institution is brought into the gospel."

In the Messianic age the best of every pagan kingdom will be blended with the best of God's chosen people to form the beautiful, productive, joy-filled new kingdom of God. Isaiah amplifies this thought with vividness when he speaks of the "wealth of the nations" being brought into God's Messianic kingdom (cf. Isa. 60:8-22; 61:1-11, etc.). The wealth of any nation is, of course, its godly people—not its silver and gold. God's great universal kingdom (the church) is to possess the glory of every nation on the earth. And so it has; and so it shall continue to do. These prophecies began to be fulfilled

when the gospel began to conquer and possess people from the regions of Tyre, Sidon, Antioch (all in Lebanon) (Acts 11:22, 26; 13:1, etc.); by the gospel capture of people from Caesarea (at the foot of Mt. Carmel) (Acts 8:40; 10:24, etc.).

The prophecy has a far greater range than that, of course. Wherever the gospel is preached and men surrender to the rule of God in Christ, there the glory of "Lebanon" is blended with the excellency of "Carmel and Sharon." There rejoicing and singing take place. There beauty and productiveness become the new order.

Verses 3-4 are apparently paraphrased in Hebrews 12:12-13. Perhaps the idea of Isaiah in this whole section (vs. 1-7) is appropriated by the Hebrews 12:12-13 passage. Hebrews 12 is the chapter in which the Mosaic dispensation is contrasted with the Christian dispensation (Zion) and the Hebrew Christians are exhorted to cling to the kingdom which cannot be shaken (Christian) because this was God's goal in the Old Testament. This seems to indicate the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is saying the Christian dispensation is the fulfillment of the promises made in Isaiah 35, and "therefore" the messianic age is the point upon which God's people are to focus for "strengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees." One thing is certain, the coming of God with vengeance, recompense and salvation should provide strength. What God is going to save from is the unbelief and perversity of carnal, satanic opposition to His redemptive work. That salvation has nothing to do with a particular land, race, people, circumstance or social class. It was accomplished by Christ *once* for *all*. Of course, we look forward to a new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But glorified circumstances or environment are irrelevant without glorified people. Heaven without sanctified people would be Hell. So it is not a land God is primarily interested in—it is a people!

v. 5-7 **SLAKED:** The first step in the process of sanctifying a people is a renewal of spiritual discernment. The "eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be

unstopped." This reminds us of Jesus' application of Isaiah 61:1-4 to His redemptive work in the synagogue in Luke 4:16-30. (cf. also Jn. 9:35-41) Spiritual sensibility will replace carnal dullness, and spiritual ability will replace debilitating sin. There was more *seen* by those whom Jesus cured of physical blindness than was seen by many of those who had perfect eyesight. Verse 5 was fulfilled in Christ in much more than a physical way and is still being fulfilled today. Men are constantly recovering their spiritual sight and hearing. Lame and dumb regained more than physical well-being when Jesus healed them. It was by being brought to faith in Him they were saved from sin.

It is sin that opposes God. All men are sinners and enemies. Men are deceived by sin. Sin is the great mirage. The great Liar, Satan, deceived man with the great lie and deceived man into opposing God's sovereignty. False philosophies, false religions and carnal political schemes form the great mirage out in the desert of sin. Men think they see life, refreshment and sustenance in the mirages. Isaiah says, when the Messianic age comes, instead of a mirage there will be real water for thirsty souls. There will be a beautiful, green, cool, satisfying oasis in the midst of the arid, false, killing wilderness of sin. The Living Water would come (Jn. 4:1-42; 7:37-39) and all who believe in Him become "rivers of living water," oases in the desert of sin. Before the gospel the nations wandered like travelers in the desert, allured and disillusioned by shadows and mirages and dreamlike phantoms of truth in the false religions and human political systems. But in the gospel of Christ they have pure fountains and calm lakes of living water which refresh them in their weary pilgrimage home.

That which was once desolate and barren will become lush with an abundance unheard of. This is the meaning of the reference to jackals, normally animals of the desert who have no vegetation in which to lie, finding tall grass, reeds and rushes in which to lie. It is an added figure of speech describing the verdure of the messianic age.

QUIZ

1. Give at least six reasons the prophetic predictions concerning the land of Palestine cannot find their fulfillment in a restored Jewish dispensation.
2. How is the glory of Lebanon given with the excellency of Carmel and Sharon to the "land"?
3. Where is the passage concerning strengthening weak hands and feeble knees paraphrased in the N.T.?
4. What was the Lord's main purpose in opening the eyes of the blind and restoring hearing in the N.T.?
5. Who is the Living Water in the desert of sin, and who become "rivers of living water"?

2. SANCTIFIED

TEXT: 35:8-10

- 8 And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed; the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein.
- 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:
- 10 and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

QUERIES

- a. What is the highway and The way?
- b. When is the everlasting joy to come?

PARAPHRASE

And a main thoroughfare shall be there in that rejuvenated wilderness. It shall be a road leading the redeemed directly to their destination. This will be called The Way of holiness, and sinners will not walk in this Way. It is reserved for those who desire to be sanctified unto the Lord. It will be a Way so clearly built and recognizable that even the inexperienced and those who have not known this Way before may not fail to comprehend it if they wish to learn of it. All dangers involved in traveling through the wastelands will be eliminated on this Way. Those whom the Lord purchases with a ransom-price will return to Him and to Zion rejoicing with songs about their redemption. Everlasting joy will crown their whole lives. They shall finally find the refreshment of their souls for which they have longed. All that would frustrate or hinder their travel will be made to disappear.

COMMENTS

v. 8-9 THE WAY: Isaiah continues to wax eloquent concerning the great work of redemption Jehovah is going to bring to a climax in the Messianic age. Redemption-opposing, enslaving ideologies are going to be defeated by one great judgmental act of God from heaven (Isa. 34). This occurred at the cross of Christ as we have already demonstrated from the N.T. God is going to take the desolation and waste caused by carnal, unbelieving programs of man and turn them into a blooming flowergarden. God will provide an oasis of living water in the midst of this world-wide desert (Isa. 35:1-7). Furthermore, as the text now being considered continues, God is going to provide a Way through this desolate wasteland of carnal confusion and chaos. The Hebrew word for *way* used here is *maselul*, which means "a raised way." The "roads" in ancient times were mere trails for the most part. But a "raised way" would be a main thoroughfare—distinctly a

road as compared to a path or trail. Instead of the wild confusion and chaos of human philosophies and schemes, God will provide His Way. It is the only Way characterized by holiness. Its uniqueness is that of the separateness of those who walk upon it. They are separated from uncleanness (spiritual and moral uncleanness). The spiritually stained and morally soiled will not travel this Way. Their exclusion will be of their own choice (Mt. 7:13-14) because Jesus is The Way (Jn. 14:6). Jeremiah speaks of this Way (Jer. 6:16-17). This Way will be so unmistakably demonstrated or marked out by God that even the man who has never seen God's Way before will recognize this as His Way. The one with no experience in the Way of God will be able to comprehend and walk in it. It will not be complex or confusing. The "Way" became a favorite synonym for the Christian life in the early church (cf. Acts 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; 24:22). This Way would be one of safety, security and peacefulness. No dangerous "beast" (which, by the way, is a figure in Daniel and Revelation to symbolize human governments opposing God's redemptive work), nothing predatory would prey upon those who choose to walk in This Way.

V. 10 THE WAYFARER: Those who travel this "raised way" will be the redeemed (Heb. *goal*) and the ransomed (Heb. *padah*). This certainly indicates the traveler on this way has been purchased with a price. The purchase or ransom occasions *everlasting* joy and results in sorrow and sighing *fleeing away*. The emphasis is on everlasting. It cannot, therefore, have its ultimate fulfillment in anything transitory or temporal such as a land or physical nation/kingdom. It is associated with coming to Zion. Zion, in its spiritual focus, is the church, not a mountain (Heb. 12:22). Those who walk upon this Way are those purchased by the blood of Christ. The joy that shall be the crowning factor of their lives (upon their heads) is the joy Jesus brought (cf. Jn. 15:11; 16:22-24; 17:13; Rom. 14:17; I Jn. 1:4, etc.). Walking on this Way of holiness, which is both clear and safe, will eliminate the need for sorrowing and sighing. Frustration is eliminated and hurt

or damage is impossible (in the eternal sense) inasmuch as the traveler has been assured of reaching his destination because his price has been paid by Jehovah.

It is interesting that this glorious chapter, describing all the beauty, glory and gladness that is to come to the redeemed, is followed (after the historical interlude of chapters 36-39) by the introduction of Isaiah's great "Servant" section (chapters 40-53). All that is to come to the redeemed is a result of the work of the "Suffering Servant" of God (Isa. 53), the Messiah.

This chapter brings to an impressive climax the whole section warning that emancipation for God's people is not from union with Egypt. Egypt, in reality, is in opposition to God's redemptive work, as are all human ideologies. Emancipation for God's people will be accomplished by God Himself in ransom and redemption. It is appropriated by those who wish it in traveling on God's Way.

QUIZ

1. What is the literal meaning of "highway" in v. 8?
2. What connection does this section have to 35:1-7?
3. Where in the N.T. is the "Way" referred to?
4. Why does the fact that the traveler upon this Way will be redeemed and ransomed point to a fulfillment in the N.T.?
5. What "joy" is referred to in v. 10?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS THIRTY-FOUR AND THIRTY-FIVE

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>host of heaven</i> | 7. <i>wilderness</i> |
| 2. <i>sword of Jehovah</i> | 8. <i>glory of Lebanon</i> |
| 3. <i>Edom</i> | 9. <i>streams in the desert</i> |
| 4. <i>line of confusion</i> | 10. <i>highway</i> |
| 5. <i>night-monster</i> | 11. <i>fool</i> |
| 6. <i>book of Jehovah</i> | 12. <i>Zion</i> |

MEMORIZATION

And a _____ shall be there, and a _____, and it shall be called _____; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the _____: the _____ man, yea fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any _____ go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the _____ shall walk there: and the _____ of Jehovah shall return, and come with _____ unto Zion; and everlasting _____ shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and _____, and sorrow and _____ shall flee away. (35:8-10)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain why the prophets spoke of the coming Messianic age in terms of cosmic cataclysms?
2. Explain the practice of using Edom to represent all God-opposing human governments.
3. Explain why the prophets used figures of speech depicting a rejuvenated land to portray the Messianic age?

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. What application may be made in proper Bible study today of the evident prophetic manner of depicting the Messianic age by cosmic upheaval?

2. What application may be made of God's attitude toward Edom in today's world of God-opposing human ideologies?
3. What application may be made in teaching today what God's Way is like from Isaiah's description of the Way in chapter 35?

VI. CHASTENING THROUGH CAPTIVITY CHAPTERS 36 - 39

A. PRESSURE, CHAPTER 36

1. PREDICAMENT

TEXT: 36:1-12

- 1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib, king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them.
- 2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field.
- 3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder.
- 4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trusteth?
- 5 I say, thy counsel and strength for the war are but vain words: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me?
- 6 Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust on him.