

Haftarah for Numbers 31

Ezekiel 25:14 Isaiah 49:24 – 50:7
Isaiah 40:24

In commenting on Israel's war against Midian in **Numbers 31**, these passages expand the breadth of God's wrath against a number of other enemies.

Vengeance on Edom

Ezekiel 25:14 - "And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God."

Edom was the land of Esau. Esau and Jacob were in conflict, and they are a type of the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh.

Romans 9:13 - "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Quoting this:

Malachi 1:1-2 - "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated, and I have made his mountains a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

Remember King Herod, of mixed Jewish-Edomite blood, continued to persecute Christ.

Vengeance on Babylon

Isaiah 49:24 – 50:7 (a part of the Seven of Consolation, read after the Fast of Ab leading up to Rosh Hashanah)

Isaiah 49:26 - "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."

But also recalling Israel's sins

Isaiah 50:1 - "...Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

...And a vision of the suffering Messiah:

Isaiah 50:5-7 - "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know

that I shall not be ashamed."

And a final emphasis on God's sovereignty over the kingdoms of this world and over Israel's enemies:

Isaiah 40:23-24 - (Also part of the Seven of Consolation) - "That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble."

By including a vision of the suffering Messiah, we are allowed to see the way God will punish Israel's enemies and deliver them - by fulfilling the prophecy of the coming Deliverer:

Genesis 3:15 - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Psalms 110:1 - "The LORD said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"

This was accomplished on the cross, and in His resurrection:

Colossians 2:15 - "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

Hebrews 2:8-9 - "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Hebrews 2:14 - "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"

It's an ongoing process in our own lives - i.e. seeing this and agreeing. The redeemed partake in Christ's triumph:

Romans 16:20 - "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"

But there is more to come at the end of time:

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 - "Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death"

Revelation 11:15 - "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 19:15 - "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron"

Revelation 20:10 - "And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, into which the beast and the false prophet had already been thrown. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

What should be our response to this? Hope and thanksgiving, of course - but also:

2 Peter 3:11-14 - "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."