

WHAT FORM DO YOUR ENEMIES TAKE?

Isaiah Chapters 15-17

Do you have any enemies? I hope not. But if you did, how would you feel if somehow they were completely done away with? If someone came in and overcame them so that you no longer had to fear their attack? Or, as a nation, how would we all react if suddenly the terrorists were no more? If some great power wiped them all off the face of the earth and we could live in safety and with peace of mind?

JUDAH had great enemies and in this section of the book of Isaiah we are finding out what will happen to those enemies. Today's scriptures look at the fate of two of them: **MOAB** and **DAMASCUS**.

Whereas, the **ASSYRIANS** that we learned about last week invaded Judah and carried them off into captivity, Damascus and Moab posed different kinds of threats to God's people. Damascus had formed an alliance with Israel to defeat Judah. Moab, early on had tried to overtake the children of Israel by seduction. They sent their beautiful young women into the camp to intermarry with Jewish young men during Moses' time (Numbers 25:1-9). Later Moab was often a place that Jews fled to in order to save their lives, whether from famine or from persecutors (1 Sam. 22:3, 4; Ruth). We will learn in Isaiah 16 that the primary sin that brought Moab's destruction, aside from idolatry, was the sin of pride.

So we see that the people of Judah, as well as people today, face enemies that come in various forms. They may be outright attacks from enemy armies. Attacks may also come in the form of temptations to satisfy our desires, or they may be temptations to make alliances with the wrong ideologies or individuals. We've been learning in our Sunday evening studies about the spiritual warfare that each Christian is engaged in and you can see here that the onslaughts are similar. Sometimes we are attacked directly. At those times it is easier to recognize the enemy and realize what is happening.

But sometimes we are seduced and taken in by something that seems to make sense, but actually is designed to draw us away from trusting in God. Those attacks are more subtle and can draw us into alliances that in the long run will damage our relationship with God.

With that in mind, let's now take a look at the prophecies in Isaiah.

Isaiah 15:1-9:

*1 **AN ORACLE CONCERNING MOAB.** Because Ar is laid waste in a night,
Moab is undone; because Kir is laid waste in a night, Moab is undone.
2 Dibon has gone up to the temple, to the high places to weep; over Nebo*

and over Medeba, Moab wails. On every head is baldness, every beard is shorn;

3 in the streets they bind on sackcloth; on the housetops and in the squares everyone wails and melts in tears.

4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out, their voices are heard as far as Jahaz; therefore the loins of Moab quiver; his soul trembles.

5 My heart cries out for Moab; his fugitives flee to Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah. For at the ascent of Luhith they go up weeping; on the road to Horonaim they raise a cry of destruction;

6 the waters of Nimrim are a desolation; the grass is withered, the new growth fails, the verdure¹ is no more.

7 Therefore the abundance they have gained and what they have laid up they carry away over the Wadi of the Willows.

8 For a cry has gone around the land of Moab; the wailing reaches to Eglaim, the wailing reaches to Beer-elim.

9 For the waters of Dibon are full of blood; yet I will bring upon Dibon even more—a lion for those of Moab who escape, for the remnant of the land.

Thus far in the book of Isaiah we have seen *oracles*, that is the word of God spoken through Isaiah, against several nations, as well as against God's own people of Israel and Judah. In Isaiah 13:1-14:23, we saw the oracle against the nation of Babylon. In Isaiah 14:29-32, we saw the judgment against the nation of Philistia. In the next two chapters we'll discuss **THE JUDGMENT AGAINST MOAB**.

But first, let's get just a little better understanding of the nation of Moab. As Israel prepared to cross the Jordan on their way to the Promised Land, they camped in the 'plains of Moab' (Numbers 22:1; Joshua 3:1) and were seduced by Moabite and Midianite women to participate in idolatrous practices (Numbers 25; Hosea 9:10).

In the days of the Judges, Eglon, king of Moab, invaded Israelite lands as far as Jericho and oppressed Israel for 18 years. Elimelech of Bethlehem migrated to Moab and his sons married Moabite women, **ORPAH AND RUTH**. Ruth later married Boaz and became the grandmother of David (Ruth 4:18–22; Matthew 1:5–16). Saul warred with the Moabites (1 Samuel 14:47) and David lodged his parents there while he was a fugitive (1 Samuel 22:3–4). Later David subdued Moab and set apart many Moabites for death (2 Samuel 8:2, 12; 1 Chronicles 18:2, 11). In the year of Elisha's death, bands of Moabites raided Israel (2 Ki. 13:20). For the most part the Moabites were the enemies of Israel and Judah. During the latter part of the 8th century, **where we pick up the story, Moab was subdued by Assyria** and compelled to pay tribute to them (Isaiah 15–16),²

MOAB lay just to the east of Israel and Judah across the Dead Sea. You might picture the layout to be similar to the state of Michigan being just west of Wisconsin across Lake

¹ Greenness of growing vegetation.

² Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. 1996. New Bible dictionary (3rd ed. /) . InterVarsity Press: Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.

Michigan. Edom was just to the south of Moab just as Indiana is south of Michigan. So it might help those who are not familiar with the geography of the Middle East to imagine Wisconsin as Israel and Judah, Michigan as Moab, and Indiana as Edom. The Moabites were descendants of Moab, the son of Lot and his oldest daughter by an incestuous relationship (Genesis 19:31-38). In the beginning Moab was friendly toward Israel but eventually they became enemies.

Here again was a lesson for Israel. The demise of Moab should have taught Israel not to depend on foreign nations but rather that they should depend on God alone. *Ar* and *Kir* were the two major cities of Moab.

I don't believe a lot of detail on this chapter will add much to our study of the entire book of Isaiah, so let me just surf through a few interesting bits of information. *Dibon* was the city where the temple of the Moabite god was located. Also in verse 2, shaving heads and beards was a sign of humiliation and sorrow. *Heshbon*, *Elealeh*, and *Jahaz* are references to cities in Moab. In verse 5 we see that this prophecy expresses much greater sympathy for Moab than for other nations to be judged, even allowing for a surviving remnant to be saved.

Nimrim is a dried up body of water or wadi (the bed or valley of a stream) picturing widespread devastation. *Brook of the willows* is a river the Moabites had to cross to escape their invaders. *Eglaim* and *Beer Elim* is a reference indicating that the shouts of the fugitives reached all the way from the northern part of Moab to the southern part. *Lions* in verse 9 probably suggests that the flight from invading armies would not bring them security, but rather new dangers from the beasts they would find in the wilderness.

So basically this chapter is telling us that Moab is swiftly overthrown. The people mourn and weep over what has happened to their major cities. They cry out to their gods, who of course are no help to them. There is the sound of wailing in the streets and even the land is so desolate that the grass has all died. The bloodshed has been extensive.

Isaiah Chapter 16

Isaiah 16:1-14:

*1 Moab's refugees at Sela **SEND LAMBS TO JERUSALEM AS A TOKEN OF ALLIANCE** with the king of Judah.*

2 The women of Moab are left like homeless birds at the shallow crossings of the Arnon River.

3 "Help us," they cry. "Defend us against our enemies. Protect us from their relentless attack. Do not betray us.

*4 Let our outcasts stay among you. Hide them from our enemies until the terror is past." **WHEN OPPRESSION AND DESTRUCTION HAVE CEASED AND ENEMY RAIDERS HAVE DISAPPEARED,***

5 then David's throne will be established by love. From that throne a faithful king will reign, one who always does what is just and right.

6 Is this Moab, the proud land we have heard so much about? Its pride and insolence are all gone now!

7 The entire land of Moab weeps. Yes, you people of Moab, mourn for the delicacies of Kir-hareseth.

8 Weep for the abandoned farms of Heshbon and the vineyards at Sibmah. The wine from those vineyards used to make the rulers of the nations drunk. Moab was once like a spreading grapevine. Her tendrils spread out as far as Jazer and trailed out into the desert. Her shoots once reached as far as the Dead Sea.

9 But now the enemy has completely destroyed that vine. So I wail and lament for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah. My tears will flow for Heshbon and Elealeh, for their summer fruits and harvests have all been destroyed.

10 Gone now is the gladness; gone is the joy of harvest. The happy singing in the vineyards will be heard no more. The treading out of grapes in the winepresses has ceased forever. I have ended all their harvest joys.

11 I will weep for Moab. My sorrow for Kir-hareseth will be very great.

12 On the hilltops the people of Moab will pray in anguish to their idols, but it will do them no good. They will cry to the gods in their temples, but no one will come to save them.

13 The Lord has already said this about Moab in the past.

14 But now the Lord says, "Within three years, without fail, the glory of Moab will be ended, and few of its people will be left alive."

We'll continue with a closer look at all of these verses.

Isaiah 16:1-5:

1 Send the tribute lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

2 Then, like fleeing birds or scattered nestlings, The daughters of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon.

3 "Give us advice, make a decision; Cast your shadow like night at high noon; Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive.

4 “Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer.” For the extortioner has come to an end, destruction has ceased, Oppressors have completely disappeared from the land.

5 A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; Moreover, he will seek justice And be prompt in righteousness.

Chapter 16 presents a story related to the devastation of **Moab** in chapter 15 but focuses on the coming flight of Moabite refugees to strongholds in Edom such as Sela, the capital of Edom about 50 miles south of Moab’s southern border. The nation of Edom was an ally of Moab. From their shelter in Edom the Moabites are told to seek refuge with the people of God in Jerusalem, for **JEHOVAH GOD IS THEIR ONLY SURE REFUGE**. In verses 3 and 4 Isaiah makes an appeal to the people of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah to maintain a godly attitude and show compassion to the Moabite refugees.³

The Moabites had now fled all the way south to escape the Assyrians who were entering Moab from the North. If they really wanted to be safe **THEY SHOULD HAVE JOINED THEMSELVES TO JERUSALEM**. Isaiah could suggest this because he had already prophesied that Jerusalem would be spared from destruction by Assyria. The one place the Assyrians could not conquer was Jerusalem ((Isaiah 10:24-34). Though the Assyrian army entered the kingdom of Judah and did a great deal of damage to the land, it could not capture Jerusalem (Isaiah 36–37). However, instead of fleeing to Mt. Zion, the Moabite fugitives fled south to the fords of the Arnon River and the “*rock city*” of Sela in Edom. Frustrated like fleeing birds, the women of Moab were begging for protection and help.

From Sela, the fugitives sent an appeal to the king of Judah to give them asylum from the enemy. But Isaiah warned them that it would take more than a request: They would need to submit to the king of Judah, which meant acknowledging the God of Judah. In that day, sending animals to a ruler was a form of paying tribute (2 Kings 3:4). Moab begged the leaders of Judah to give them refuge from the enemy, like a protecting rock on a hot day.

Isaiah was not impressed with the appeals of the Moabites. He called the Moabites extortioners and oppressors because **THEY WANTED JUDAH’S HELP, BUT THEY DID NOT WANT JUDAH’S GOD**. But Moab would not submit; they wanted deliverance on their own terms.⁴ Isn’t that a lot like people today? We want freedom from oppression, violence, and addictions, but we also want it on our own terms.

Rather than submit to the all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful God who loves us,

³ Pfeiffer, C. F. 1962. The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament . Moody Press: Chicago

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1992. Be comforted. An Old Testament study. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

rather than obey Him totally, we want God to do things our way. We want Him to wink at our sin and bless us anyway. We forget or deny who God really is.

VERSE 5 IS DEFINITELY A MESSIANIC PROMISE, pointing to the day when Messiah will reign in righteousness and mercy on David's throne. **God in His love will see that the One from the house of David, the Messiah, will sit on David's throne** (2 Samuel 7:16) **and judge the world fairly in justice and righteousness**, a frequent topic in Isaiah's book (Isaiah 9:7; 11:4; 28:6; 32:16; 33:5; 42:1, 3-4; 51:5).

Isaiah 16:6-12:

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, an excessive pride; Even of his arrogance, pride, and fury; His idle boasts are false.

7 Therefore Moab will wail; everyone of Moab will wail. You will moan for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth as those who are utterly stricken.

8 For the fields of Heshbon have withered, the vines of Sibmah as well; The lords of the nations have trampled down its choice clusters which reached as far as Jazer and wandered to the deserts; its tendrils spread themselves out and passed over the sea.

9 Therefore I will weep bitterly for Jazer, for the vine of Sibmah; I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh; for the shouting over your summer fruits and your harvest has fallen away.

10 Gladness and joy are taken away from the fruitful field; in the vineyards also there will be no cries of joy or jubilant shouting, no treader treads out wine in the presses, for I have made the shouting to cease.

11 Therefore my heart intones like a harp for Moab And my inward feelings for Kir-hareseth.

12 So it will come about when Moab presents himself, when he wearies himself upon his high place and comes to his sanctuary to pray, that he will not prevail.

Isaiah exposed the pride and conceit of Moab. The people of **Moab** should have realized their helplessness before the Assyrians and turned to God through their neighbor Judah, but they refused to do so. Because of their pride and confidence **that they did not need God, the fruitfulness and productivity of their land would be stopped.**

Their harvest was destroyed: grapes, various fruits, and other things they normally harvested at the end of summer. The invading Assyrian army would wipe out Moab's chances for survival. Isaiah displayed genuine emotion over the destruction of so rich an agricultural resource. Isaiah felt deeply for Moab; his heart responded to her calamities as the strings of a harp respond when played. Moab's religious ritual of sacrificing at her high place and praying at her shrine would not help alleviate God's judgment.⁵

⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

Like many other people with whom God has pleaded through His prophets, virtually begging them to turn from their evil ways and submit to His authority, the leaders of Moab also refused. A preliminary judgment is predicted in the last two verses.

Isaiah 16:13,14:

13 This is the word which the Lord spoke earlier concerning Moab.

14 But now the Lord speaks, saying, “Within three years, as a hired man would count them, the glory of Moab will be degraded along with all his great population, and his remnant will be very small and impotent.”

Now the prophet announced that all this destruction would occur within three years. This is similar to chapter 7 in which Isaiah told Ahaz that the Aram-Israel alliance would break up in a few years. Possibly this oracle against Moab was written about the same time, picturing Tiglath-Pileser’s coming invasion of Moab in 732 (after he invaded Aram). Or perhaps Isaiah was saying that Moab would be attacked in three years (701) by Sennacherib, in the year he invaded Judah.

The people of Isaiah’s time could have watched current events to see if the LORD really was prophesying through him. When they saw that his words came true, they could be assured that his message of salvation for Judah (Isaiah 16:5) would also come true.⁶

ISAIAH CHAPTER 17

THE PROPHECY REGARDING THE DESTRUCTION OF DAMASCUS AND ISRAEL

Isaiah 17:1-14:

1 This message came to me concerning DAMASCUS: “Look, Damascus will disappear! It will become a heap of ruins.”

2 The cities of Aroer will be deserted. Sheep will graze in the streets and lie down unafraid. There will be no one to chase them away.

⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

3 The fortified cities of Israel will also be destroyed, and the power of Damascus will end. The few left in Aram will share the fate of Israel's departed glory,” says the Lord Almighty.

4 “In that day the glory of Israel will be very dim, for poverty will stalk the land.

5 Israel will be abandoned like the grainfields in the valley of Rephaim after the harvest.

6 Only a few of its people will be left, like the stray olives left on the tree after the harvest. Only two or three remain in the highest branches, four or five out on the tips of the limbs. Yes, Israel will be stripped bare of people,” says the Lord, the God of Israel.

7 Then at last the people will think of their Creator and have respect for the Holy One of Israel.

8 They will no longer ask their idols for help or worship what their own hands have made. They will never again bow down to their Asherah poles or burn incense on the altars they built.

9 Their largest cities will be as deserted as overgrown thickets. They will become like the cities the Amorites abandoned when the Israelites came here so long ago.

10 Why? Because you have turned from the God who can save you—the Rock who can hide you. You may plant the finest imported grapevines,

11 and they may grow so well that they blossom on the very morning you plant them, but you will never pick any grapes from them. Your only harvest will be a load of grief and incurable pain.

JUDGMENT ON THE ASSYRIAN ARMY

12 Look! The armies rush forward like waves thundering toward the shore.

13 But though they roar like breakers on a beach, God will silence them. They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind or like dust whirling before a storm.

14 In the evening Israel waits in terror, but by dawn its enemies are dead. This is the just reward of those who plunder and destroy the people of God.

Now we come to consider the **burden** of Damascus. Hopefully you'll remember we touched on this earlier when we spoke about the Syrian-Israeli alliance that was formed against **KING AHAZ OF JUDAH** back in chapters 7 and 8 of Isaiah. Syria was sometimes referred to as Damascus or as Aram and Israel was also called Ephraim. But the two nations were allied in order to take over Judah. Because of that alliance Syria would have to share in the judgment of God that would come upon Israel. The first few verses of this chapter address this attack upon Damascus, the capital of Syria.

Isaiah 17:1-6:

*1 **THE ORACLE CONCERNING DAMASCUS.** “Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city And will become a fallen ruin.*

2 *"The cities of Aroer are forsaken; They will be for flocks to lie down in, and there will be no one to frighten them.*

3 *"The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim, and sovereignty from Damascus and the remnant of Aram; They will be like the glory of the sons of Israel," Declares the Lord of hosts.*

REFERENCE NOW TRANSFERS TO ISRAEL

4 *Now in that day the glory of Jacob will fade, And the fatness of his flesh will become lean.*

5 *It will be even like the reaper gathering the standing grain, As his arm harvests the ears, or it will be like one gleaning ears of grain In the valley of Rephaim.*

6 *Yet gleanings will be left in it like the shaking of an olive tree, Two or three olives on the topmost bough, Four or five on the branches of a fruitful tree, Declares the Lord, the God of Israel.*

SYRIA WOULD FALL AND SO WOULD ISRAEL. This prophecy was made by Isaiah sometime before the fall of Damascus to the Assyrian army in 732 B.C. We see here a picture of deserted ruins where animals can lie down without being disturbed by humans. The fortified city in verse 3 is most likely the capital of Ephraim, Samaria. Jacob in verse 4 is yet another reference to Israel. Just as harvesters stripped bare the fertile fields in the valley of Rephaim, so will God's judgment be on the descendants of Jacob, Israel. The olive tree in verse 6 has reference to the fact that **both Syria and Israel**, just like an olive tree stripped of almost all of its olives, **will have very few people left**.

Isaiah 17:7-11:

7 *In that day man will have regard for his Maker And his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.*

8 *He will not have regard for the altars, the work of his hands, Nor will he look to that which his fingers have made, Even the Asherim and incense stands.*

9 *In that day their strong cities will be like forsaken places in the forest, or like branches which they abandoned before the sons of Israel; and the land will be a desolation.*

10 *For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the rock of your refuge. Therefore you plant delightful plants and set them with vine slips of a strange god.*

11 *In the day that you plant it you carefully fence it in, and in the morning you bring your seed to blossom; But the harvest will be a heap in a day of sickness and incurable pain.*

"In that day" at the beginning of verse 7 introduces an additional prophecy unlike the preceding ones and describes a different situation. In the "*last days*" refers to the "*End Times*" when **SEVERE JUDGMENTS FROM GOD WILL AWAKEN A REMNANT OF ISRAEL** to the fact that they have rejected the Lord, and **THEN THAT REMNANT WILL REPENT AND BE SAVED**. People will no longer worship false gods made of stone upon incense altars or

wood as they did in Isaiah's time. The images made of stone stood for the Canaanite god, Baal. The wooden object represented the goddess Asherah, the mother goddess, and associate of El, the father of gods. Hating idolatry the remnant of the nation of **ISRAEL WILL FIND THEIR HOPE IN THE LORD** who will then protect them along with all the other people of God who have also accepted Christ as their Savior.

"In that day" in verse 9 takes us back again to the 8th century B.C. This and following verses show us just how foolish the nations of Israel and Syria were. Even though they had turned away from God, they still thought that they could prosper in that sinful condition. The people of the United States think the same thing.

As a result of the judgment in that day, however, **BOTH ISRAEL AND SYRIA** and their **strong cities would be abandoned and thickets and underbrush would grow.** Because of their unfaithfulness to the true God and having forgotten Him, efforts at planting vines and getting a harvest would be fruitless. The plants would be diseased and the people would be in pain.⁷

Isaiah reminded the people of the futility of trying to meet their needs without God's help. Verses 10 and 11 have sobering implications for people of all times. So often, people decide to "bootstrap," to do things on their own, with no recognition of the great Lord God. We try to earn money, plant fields, build bigger and better factories. We look only at our own efforts and when profits roll in we pat ourselves on the back. This is a very dangerous approach, as verses 10 and 11 indicate. The Word of God has some additional comments on this:

1 Chronicles 29:12, NLT:

RICHES AND HONOR COME FROM YOU [GOD] ALONE, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength.

Proverbs 21:21, NLT:

Whoever pursues godliness and unfailing love will find life, godliness, and honor.

Proverbs 22:4, NLT:

True humility and fear of the LORD lead to riches, honor, and long life.

The Lord Jesus Himself put it eloquently in a parable He told, recorded in Luke 12:16-21, NAS:

16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive.

17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'

⁷ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

18 "And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

21 "So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

We are on dangerous ground when we forget that everything comes from God and that we are dependent on Him. On the other hand, the road to the greatest blessing is to honor God in everything we do.

I am not sure where Charles Lindbergh stood in his relationship to God, whether or not he was a born again Christian, but he said something worthy of noting at this point:

"In my youth science was more important to me than either man or God. I worshiped science . . . It took many years for me to discover that science, with all its brilliance, lights only a middle chapter of creation.

*"I saw the aircraft I love destroying the civilization I expected it to save. Now I understand that spiritual truth is more essential to a nation than the mortar in its cities' walls. **FOR WHEN THE ACTIONS OF A PEOPLE ARE UNDERGIRD BY SPIRITUAL TRUTHS, THERE IS SAFETY. WHEN SPIRITUAL TRUTHS ARE REJECTED, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE CIVILIZATION WILL COLLAPSE.**"⁸*

And where are we in our country today? On the brink of rejecting the spiritual truths that our forefathers held dear. We need to take heed before it is too late.

Isaiah 17:12-14:

12 Alas, the uproar of many peoples who roar like the roaring of the seas, and the rumbling of nations who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!

13 The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters, but He will rebuke them and they will flee far away, and be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind, or like whirling dust before a gale.

14 At evening time, behold, there is terror! Before morning they are no more. Such will be the portion of those who plunder us and the lot of those who pillage us.

The roar of many people is said to be like the roar of surging waters. **These peoples were the Assyrians**, whom God was using to judge His people. Apparently the "nations" means the particular nation which was the dominant power in its day, namely, Assyria. When God punished the Assyrians, they would become like chaff (Isaiah. 29:5),

⁸ Warner, Wayne. *1,000 Stories & Quotations of Famous People*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1972, p. 196.

the light and useless part of grain which, when winnowed, blows away. How appropriate that though Assyria brought terror in the evening, they would be gone before morning, for such was the case with the Assyrian army (Isaiah 37:36-37). Though the Assyrian soldiers had plundered many cities of Judah, **185,000 of them were killed overnight when they were about to attack Jerusalem.**⁹ God sent a plague over the camp while the soldiers were asleep.

While this text has been fulfilled on a couple of occasions in Israel's past, regarding the Assyrians and later the Babylonians, it also coincides with what Jesus Himself has prophesied and what the book of Revelation tells us will happen in that last battle of history, the **BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**, which is recorded in Revelation 18. We will read the main points here, but encourage you to read the entire chapter on your own at home:

Revelation 18:4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, and 20:

- 4 Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, "Come away from her [Babylon], my people. Do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her.*
- 5 For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God is ready to judge her for her evil deeds.*
- 9 And the rulers of the world who took part in her immoral acts and enjoyed her great luxury will mourn for her as they see the smoke rising from her charred remains.*
- 10 They will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will cry out, "How terrible, how terrible for Babylon, that great city! In one single moment God's judgment came on her."*
- 14 "All the fancy things you loved so much are gone," they cry. "The luxuries and splendor that you prized so much will never be yours again. They are gone forever."*
- 15 The merchants who became wealthy by selling her these things will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will weep and cry.*
- 19 And they will throw dust on their heads to show their great sorrow. And they will say, "How terrible, how terrible for the great city! She made us all rich from her great wealth. And now in a single hour it is all gone."*
- 20 But you, O heaven, rejoice over her fate. And you also rejoice, O holy people of God and apostles and prophets! For at last God has judged her on your behalf.*

By His omnipotent power, God will deliver His people and establish them in paradise forever.

Who are your enemies? Are they people? Are they habits/addictions? A "besetting sin" of some sort? Money problems or creditors? Let us share with you God's formula for dealing with enemies, found in Proverbs 16:7, NAS:

⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Have you been pondering strategies to deal with your enemies? Your most effective strategy is to honor God and His Son, Jesus Christ, as Lord of your life and to follow His guidelines for living, as found in the Bible. Then you will have God on your side and He will show you how to deal with your enemies.