

Isaiah 34:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

Analysis

Burning pitch and brimstone echoes Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction (Genesis 19:24), linking Edom's judgment to paradigmatic divine wrath. The streams becoming pitch reverses God's life-giving water provision, showing how judgment removes all blessing. This imagery foreshadows hell's description as a lake of burning sulfur (Revelation 21:8). The transformation of natural elements into instruments of destruction demonstrates creation's participation in divine judgment.

Historical Context

The Dead Sea region near Edom contained natural bitumen and sulfur deposits, making this imagery particularly vivid to Isaiah's audience.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the reversal of blessing to curse illustrate the serious consequences of rejecting God?
2. What does this imagery teach about hell's eternal nature?
3. How should the reality of such judgment affect our evangelism?

Interlinear Text

וְנִהְפָּךְ וְ	וְנָחַל יְה	לְזָפֶת	וְעָפָר ה
thereof shall be turned	And the streams	into pitch	and the dust
H2015	H5158	H2203	H6083
לְגִפְרִית	וְהָיְתָ ה	אֶרֶץ ה	לְזָפֶת
thereof into brimstone	H1961	and the land	into pitch
H1614		H776	H2203
בְּעִרָה:			
thereof shall become burning			
H1197			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 29:23 (Parallel theme): And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

Psalms 11:6 (Parallel theme): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.