

is four times rendered Idumea in the King James Version. Dumah omits the first letter of the name. It is an appropriate title because of the great desert silences in the region of Edom. In the present situation it suggests the failure of the Edomites, descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, to make common cause with the Israelites.

Edom is pictured as standing on the sidelines, waiting to see which way the tide will turn. Is it advantageous to side with the Judaeans, or against them? From Seir a voice is heard, asking about the present outlook. Is the night almost over? Will the cruel danger soon be at an end? Will Judah be delivered from the Assyrian menace, or will she succumb?

The watchman replies that morning is ahead, but not for all. God will deliver Jerusalem -- morning is coming. But for Edom, which has refused to stand alongside Judah, only night stretches ahead.

The burden ends with an invitation to make more than a casual investigation of God's decrees. It is not enough merely to ask whether the long night is nearly over. God is not simply a last resort, to whom we can go for help in need. He wants us to come to Him in every need. If we are going to inquire at all, we should do it constantly. Come to God and seek help and advice from Him. Return to Him with your whole heart, and He will pour blessing upon you!

The Burden of Arabia

Another brief burden finishes the chapter. Arabia is not a great power which might serve as a strong protection against Assyria, but it seems to offer a place of escape if flight becomes necessary. Verses 14 and 15 state that fugitives have found help in Arabia. Tema is an oasis in the Arabian desert.

Isaiah is pointing out that there is no place to which Judah can turn for help against Assyria, except to God Himself. Even flight into the Arabian desert is shown to be useless. Verse 13 depicts the travelers in Arabia as being in such danger that they have to hide in the forest during the night. Verses 16 and 17 state that even Arabia will fall before the Assyrian conquerors. Kedar is an important section of Arabia. All the glory of Kedar will fail.