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The LORD's Judgment Against the Nations

34: 1-17

Judgment is not a comfortable subject. Even **the LORD Himself** calls it **His strange work** and **alien task (28:21)**. But it is an indispensable part of the Bible's teaching about the last days. It has to do with the fact that **God is King (Chapter 33)**. And as **King, He** must rule or **He** is no **King** at all. This means that rebellion must be put down. Even though **ADONAI** is beyond patient, it is clear that **His** anger is just and entirely devastating. We are fooling ourselves if we think any differently. Thus, there is an urgent call for all the **nations** to **listen** and **pay attention**.



The powerful poem here depicts the effects of **God's** wrath upon **the** Gentile **nations** in **the far eschatological future** at the end of the Great Tribulation. In **34:1-4** the universal nature of the judgment is pictured. Not even the heavens themselves will escape. Then **34:5-8** applies this judgment to **Edom**, much as was done with Moab in **25:10-12**. *The language here is of sacrifice, reminding the reader that unless someone provides a sacrifice for our sins, we become the sacrifice.* Ultimately, as the B'rit Chadashah makes plain, it is only **God Himself** who can offer that sacrifice for all (**Is 53; Rom 5:5-10**). Then **34:9-17** continues the address to **Edom** as the typical nation, depicting the land as left utterly desolate, inhabited by nothing but desert and desolation. If the language is severe and harsh here, it is because of the seriousness of the sin. The rebellion of a whole world against **Ha'Shem** is not a matter that deserves a slap on the wrist. Sin always takes you further than you want to go and costs you more than you want to pay. Nevertheless, there is a price to be paid.¹¹⁷

How do we relate to such a savage passage? We must see it through our **Father's** eyes. Even through the eyes of **Christ**. We must ask ourselves where our trust really resides. Does it reside with the Edoms of the world? If so, we are headed into the desert *with* those Edoms. To put our ultimate trust in creatures instead of **the Creator** flies in the face of all logic, because one day all **the nations** will eventually be judged by **Him**.

Chapters 34 and **35** present a striking contrast between a productive Land turned into a desert (**chapter 34**), and a desert turning into a garden (**Chapter 35**). As a result, they end the collection of teachings concerning the nations and **ADONAI's** sovereignty over them (**Chapters 13** to **35**). When all is said and done, **Isaiah** says the issue is really clear and simple. Sinful man cannot stand before a holy **God**. Any attempt to build a life apart from **Him** is futile. **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)**. In a real sense, either you *accept* **the LORD's** sacrifice on the cross, or you *become* the sacrifice. Our only hope is **the Rock** in the wilderness (**Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11; Psalm 78:15-16, 105:41**).