

Notes

The LORD's Judgment Upon The Nations (34:1–17)

- The LORD is not merely the God of Israel; He is the sovereign Judge of the whole earth. Isaiah uses Edom as a specific example of God's judgment, while also looking forward to the future Day of the LORD, when Christ will return to defeat the rebellious nations, and establish His righteous, millennial kingdom.
- God is not only gracious and merciful but also holy and just. His patience does not mean that He overlooks sin. The LORD will judge all who rebel against Him, and no earthly power can ultimately stand against Him.

1. The LORD Will Judge the Rebellious Nations (34:1–4)

- Isaiah begins with a solemn summons: *"Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people....."* (v1). Every nation and every people are called to listen because the LORD is about to pronounce His judgment. No nation is beyond God's authority, and no people are exempt from His justice. The LORD is the ultimate Judge and Ruler of all (cf. Gen 18:25). Isaiah 34 looks beyond the judgments upon nations such as Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria to the great Day of the LORD when God will judge the rebellious nations.
- V2 gives the reason for this summons: *"For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies."* God's "indignation" is His holy & righteous anger against sin. He judges because He is holy and sin deserves judgment. We must therefore never treat sin lightly.
- Isaiah describes the judgment as though it has already happened: *"He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter"* (v2). Although the judgment was future from Isaiah's perspective, it was so certain that he could speak of it as an accomplished fact. What God has determined will surely come to pass. God remains in control even when His judgment has not yet come. Earthly kingdoms are temporary, but God's kingdom is everlasting (cf. Dan 4:30, 32).
- V3 describes the terrible consequences of divine judgment: *"Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses."* To deny burial was a sign of great shame and disgrace. The graphic language emphasises the severity & completeness of God's judgment (cf. Rev 19:17–18). God's judgment is not something to be dismissed or taken lightly.
- V4 moves from the earth to the heavens: *"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."* Isaiah uses dramatic cosmic language to describe the great upheaval associated with

the Day of the LORD (cf. Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12–14). The Creator is sovereign over His entire creation. These verses therefore look toward the future Day of the LORD and the ultimate triumph of Christ (cf. Matt 24:21, 29–30; Rev 19:11–21). God's patience today is an opportunity to repent, not permission to continue in sin (2 Pet 3:9).

2. The LORD Will Completely Judge His Enemies (34:5–15)

- Isaiah now focuses on Edom as a specific example of God's judgment: *"For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea"* (v5). The expression *"my sword shall be bathed in heaven"* emphasises that this judgment originates with God Himself. Behind the events of history stands the sovereign LORD, executing His righteous judgment. Edom was an ancient enemy of Israel (Gen 25:23; Num 20:14–21; Obad 10–14; Ezek 35). Edom therefore provides a fitting picture of those who oppose the LORD and His purposes.
- Isaiah declares: *"The sword of the LORD is filled with blood"* (v6). The imagery of a great slaughter emphasises the severity of God's judgment. The references to *"a sacrifice in Bozrah"* and *"a great slaughter in the land of Idumea"* describe the fearful completeness of judgment, not atonement for sin. V7 adds: *"And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls."* Even the strongest creatures cannot escape God's judgment. The important question is not how powerful we are, but whether we are right with God.
- V8 explains the reason for this judgment: *"For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion."* The *"controversy of Zion"* points to the opposition directed against God's purposes concerning Jerusalem & His people. God has not forgotten the hatred, violence & oppression directed against His people. His justice may seem delayed, but it will come in His appointed time (2 Pet 3:8–9).
- VV9–10 describe Edom's terrifying aftermath: *"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone."* The land is consumed by fire and left desolate. The imagery recalls the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sin has consequences & God's judgment is certain.
- VV11–15 describe a once-inhabited land becoming a wilderness occupied by wild creatures. Palaces and fortresses become ruins, and human civilisation disappears. V11 says: *"And he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."* The picture is of God measuring

out destruction and emptiness. Human achievement, wealth, and pride are ultimately temporary. We must therefore place our security in the LORD, not in the things we build or possess (Matt 6:19–21).

- Edom's judgment also points us toward the certainty of God's final judgment upon His enemies. At the end of the Tribulation, the nations will gather in rebellion against Christ. But Christ will return in glory and defeat the rebellious armies. The Beast and the False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire, and Christ will reign as King (Rev 19:11–21; 20:1–6).

3. The LORD's Word Will Certainly Be Fulfilled (34:16–17)

- After describing Edom's desolation, Isaiah closes with an affirmation of the absolute certainty of God's Word: *"Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read"* (v16). Isaiah invites his readers to examine what God has written and see that His Word will surely come to pass. *"No one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate."* The creatures appointed to inhabit Edom's ruins would appear exactly as God had declared. Nothing is overlooked, and nothing can prevent the fulfilment of God's Word.
- God's Word cannot fail. Isaiah explains: *"For my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them"* (v16). The LORD has spoken, and His Spirit brings about what He has commanded. When God speaks, His sovereign power guarantees the fulfilment of His Word. This gives us confidence not only in God's warnings but also in His promises. The God who kept His Word in the past will keep His Word in the future. Christ will return and establish His kingdom because God has promised it.
- The LORD Himself determines the future condition & inhabitants of Edom's land. V17: *"And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line."* The ruined land becomes a continuing testimony to God's judgment upon pride, rebellion, and hostility toward His purposes. What God has appointed cannot be overturned by human strength (Prov 19:21). VV16–17 give us a simple challenge: Know God's Word. Believe God's Word. Live according to God's Word. If God has said it, we can trust it - even when we cannot yet see it (55:11).
- Isaiah 34 gives us a sobering picture of God's holiness, justice, sovereignty, and faithfulness. The Day of the LORD will bring judgment upon a world that has rejected God's authority and opposed Christ. God's patience today is an opportunity for repentance, which will not last forever. The question is not whether Christ will come, but whether we are ready for His coming.