



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

## **"The Nightmare Chapter I'd Prefer to Avoid (The LORD Prefers that Too)"**

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

### **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts (TLV):** *Is 34:1-17; Isaiah 35; Ex. 34:6-7; Is. 24:21; 27:1; Amos 1:11-13; Obad. 10-15; Ps. 24:1; Deut. 30:19; 2 Pet. 3:9-13; Rev. 6:12-17*

There are chapters in Scripture that feel like a gift to linger in—and then there are chapters like Isaiah 34. This is one I'd honestly prefer to avoid. It's heavy. It's graphic. It's uncomfortable. And yet, the deeper truth is this: **Isaiah 34 isn't a chapter God delights in either.** This is not Him "licking His chops." This is the nightmare scenario He has been warning against from the beginning. Every warning that was given before this was an attempt to stop us from ever getting here.

That's why passages like this must always be filtered through **who the LORD has already revealed Himself to be.** When Moses asked, *"Show me Your glory,"* ADONAI didn't display raw power—He revealed His **character.** *"Adonai, Adonai, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth..."* (Exod. 34:6-7). That revelation is the lens through which Isaiah 34 must be read. This chapter doesn't contradict His love—it proves how long He waited – how "Slow-to-flare-His-nostrils" He has been – before judgment came.

Isaiah 34 and 35 stand side by side like a fork in the road. One shows us **what happens when the world finally gets flipped right-side-up,** and the other shows us **what happens to those who chose life while everything still felt upside down.** This chapter shows us the end of the road for stubborn independence from God—and it's meant to stop us before we go any further.

### **1. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS REAL—BUT IT IS NEVER RUSHED**

Isaiah opens with a global summons: *"Draw near, O nations... let the earth hear, and all it contains"* (Isa. 34:1). This isn't a private warning. This isn't just about Israel. This is **universal accountability.** Humanity, creation, and even the spiritual powers behind the nations are all addressed. Scripture has always told us that creation itself groans under the weight of human rebellion (Gen. 3; Rom. 8). Long before we understood tectonic plates or continental drift, God's Word described a fractured world as the result of a fractured relationship with its Creator.

When Isaiah says, *"Adonai is enraged against all the nations"* (Isa. 34:2), it doesn't cancel out His patience—it confirms that His "slow-to-anger-ness" has been exhausted. God's anger is not impulsive. It is restrained, delayed, and repeatedly warned about. He sent prophet after prophet saying, *"Turn back. Don't make Me do this."* The nightmare only arrives after mercy has been refused again and again.

The word **kherem**—utterly devoted to destruction—doesn't mean chaos or cruelty. It means **complete removal of corruption.** Like Jericho, like Amalek, the judgment signals that **God alone wins the battle,** and no one gets to profit from what rebellion produced. Isaiah is showing us that when holiness finally confronts corruption without restraint, **nothing unclean survives.** The judgment is terrifying—but it is also just.

### **2. WHEN CORRUPTION IS FULLY REVEALED, CREATION RESPONDS**

The language escalates quickly. Bodies unburied. Blood saturating the land. The heavens themselves dissolving. *"The skies will be rolled up like a scroll"* (Isa. 34:4). This is not poetic exaggeration—it's cosmic consequence. Isaiah already told us that ADONAI will punish both *"the host of heaven on high and the kings of the earth on the earth"* (Isa. 24:21). What's happening here is not just geopolitical collapse—it's **the exposure of spiritual rot.** That word "dissolve" carries

the idea of **putrefaction**. What is rotten finally rots. What has been internally corrupted can no longer hold together. Like an overripe fig falling from the branch, the systems opposed to the Source of Life simply collapse under their own decay. Revelation echoes this language because the same truth applies: **corruption always self-destructs when confronted by holiness**.

Edom becomes the picture—not because God had something personal against Esau, but because Edom consistently chose **pride, cruelty, and indifference**. They refused brotherhood. They celebrated Judah's fall. They stood aloof when compassion was required. And Scripture makes it clear: **passive cruelty is still cruelty**. "*You should not rejoice over your brother in the day of his destruction*" (Obad. 12). Edom becomes the symbol of every nation—and every heart—that refuses mercy while benefiting from injustice.

### 3. THE NIGHTMARE IS THE END OF SELF—BUT IT IS NOT GOD'S DESIRE

What follows is haunting. Streams turned to pitch. Land burning. Cities overtaken by wild creatures. The measuring line—the tool used for building – for construction—now measures *destruction...* desolation. Isaiah deliberately uses *tohu v'bohu* ("formless and void")—the language of Genesis 1—to tell us something devastating: **this is creation undone**. Humanity's rebellion leads back to chaos. The kingdom of this world collapses into silence.

And yet, even here, God is still orderly. He apportions land to creatures. He keeps His word. "*Seek from the scroll of Adonai and read... for His mouth has commanded it, and His Ruach has gathered them*" (Isa. 34:16). Judgment is not random. It is precise. It is settled. And it is final. But Isaiah 34 is not where God wants us to live. This is the nightmare He warned us about so we wouldn't have to experience it. Isaiah 35 stands right on the other side—where deserts bloom, where highways lead to freedom, where sorrow flees. God has always said, "*I set before you life and death... choose life*" (Deut. 30:19). Judgment is real—but **mercy is His desire – Mercy is what HE wants/wills**.

### CONCLUSION

Isaiah 34 shows us where the road of self-rule ends. Isaiah 35 shows us where trust leads. Both are coming. One is desolation. One is restoration. One is the end of pride. One is the fulfillment of hope. And God has made it clear—*He does not want anyone to perish*. Peter echoes Isaiah when he says, "*The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise... He is patient toward you, not wanting any to perish, but for all to come to repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9). The delay isn't weakness—it's mercy. But the delay will not last forever.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important to interpret judgment passages through God's revealed character in Ex. 34?
2. How does Isaiah 34 challenge the idea that God's patience means judgment will never come?
3. In what ways does Edom represent attitudes we still see in the world today?
4. How does the contrast between Isaiah 34 and 35 shape the call to repentance?
5. What does "choosing life" practically look like in daily obedience?

### CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, we thank You that You are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in *chesed* – in covenantal Love and Loyalty. We confess that we often prefer comfort over truth and self-rule over surrender. Let this warning not harden us, but awaken us. Lead us away from the nightmare of our own ways and into the beauty of Your kingdom. Teach us to choose life, to walk humbly, and to trust the forever You have promised.

*B'Shem Yeshua, In Yeshua's Name, Amen.*