

Jeremiah 25:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.

Analysis

A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. The phrase šā'ôn 'aḏ-qěṣê hā'āreṣ (שָׁאֵן עַד-קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ, noise even to the ends of the earth) suggests the universal scope of judgment—no corner of earth will escape the tumult. The term rîb (רִיב, controversy) is legal terminology for a covenant lawsuit. God brings charges against the nations, indicting them for violation of His moral law.

The phrase nišpāṭ hû' lēkol-bāśār (נִשְׁפָּט הוּא לְכָל-בָּשָׂר, he will plead/judge with all flesh) uses 'all flesh' (kol-bāśār) to emphasize humanity's creatureliness and mortality. The verb nišpāṭ can mean 'plead' (presenting a legal case) or 'judge' (executing sentence). Here both senses apply—God presents His case and executes judgment. The phrase hārēšā'îm nēṭānām laḥereḇ (הָרִשְׁעִים נָתַנָּם לַחֶרֶב, the wicked he will give to the sword) specifies the sentence: death by warfare. This previews the final judgment when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead (Acts 17:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Historical Context

The concept of God's 'controversy' with Israel appears throughout the prophets (Hosea 4:1, Micah 6:2). Here it extends to all nations. The ancient understanding of deity typically limited gods to particular territories or peoples; Jeremiah's radical claim was that Yahweh had jurisdiction over all peoples everywhere. This monotheistic universalism prepared for the Christian gospel—there is one God who will judge all humanity through Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16). The 'noise to the ends of the earth' began fulfillment in the Babylonian conquests but awaits ultimate fulfillment in final judgment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does God's 'controversy with the nations' teach about universal moral law written on human conscience?
2. How does the phrase 'all flesh' emphasize humanity's common creatureliness and shared accountability before the Creator?
3. In what ways should the certainty of universal judgment ('to the ends of the earth') shape Christian missions and evangelism?

Interlinear Text

בָּ א shall come H935	שָׁאוֹן A noise H7588	עַד H5704	קֵץ ה even to the ends H7097	הָאָרֶץ of the earth H776	כִּי H3588	יֵב hath a controversy H7379
יְהוָה: for the LORD H3068	בְּגוֹיִם with the nations H1471	נִשְׁפָּט he will plead H8199	וְהָ H1931	לְכָל H3605	בְּשָׂר with all flesh H1320	
הַרְשָׁעִים them that are wicked H7563	נָתַן he will give H5414	לַחֶרֶב to the sword H2719	נֹאֵם saith H5002	יְהוָה: for the LORD H3068		

Additional Cross-References

Joel 3:2 (Parallel theme): I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Hosea 4:1 (Word): Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

Isaiah 66:16 (Word): For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

Micah 6:2 (References Lord): Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

Isaiah 34:8 (References Lord): For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Hosea 12:2 (References Lord): The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

