

# Numbers 16:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

## Analysis

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**All Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them**—the Hebrew *nuwc* (נוּע) means to flee in terror. The ground opening beneath Korah's household produced a *za'aqah* (זָעָקָה), a cry of distress so horrific that witnesses feared immediate divine judgment upon themselves. Their words "**lest the earth swallow us up also**" reveal both the terror of God's holiness and recognition that sin brings corporate consequences in covenant community.

This fear was godly and necessary—the fear that leads to wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Israel learned that God's *mishpat* (מִשְׁפָּט, judgment) is not arbitrary but surgical, separating rebels from the faithful. The earth literally discriminated between Korah's tents and the rest of Israel (v. 32-33).

## Historical Context

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This occurred at Kadesh during Israel's second year in the wilderness (c. 1444 BC). Korah, a Kohathite, led 250 prominent leaders in challenging Moses and Aaron's authority. The dual judgment—earth swallowing Korah's household, fire consuming the 250 censers—demonstrated God's comprehensive vindication of His appointed leadership.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. Does the fear of God's holiness inform your approach to corporate worship and church discipline?
2. How should modern believers balance confidence in Christ's mediation with holy reverence for God's righteous judgment?
3. When you witness God's judgment on others, does it produce godly fear or self-righteous presumption?

## Interlinear Text

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וְכָל	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֲשֶׁר	סְבִיבֹתֶיהָ	וְסָו	לְקוֹלָם	כִּי
H3605	<b>And all Israel</b>	H834	<b>that were round about</b>	<b>them fled</b>	<b>at the cry</b>	H3588
	H3478		H5439	H5127	H6963	
אָמְרוּ	פֶּן	וַתִּבְלַע נֹו	הָאָרֶץ:			
<b>of them for they said</b>	H6435	<b>swallow us up</b>	<b>Lest the earth</b>			
H559		H1104	H776			

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