

Habakkuk 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Analysis

After mocking dead idols, God declares His living presence: 'But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him' (vaYahweh beheikhal qodsho has mipanav kol-ha'aretz). Contrast is stark: idols are dead; Yahweh lives and reigns. 'In his holy temple' (beheikhal qodsho) indicates both heavenly throne room and earthly presence. 'Let all the earth keep silence before him' (has mipanav kol-ha'aretz) commands reverent awe—the only appropriate response to divine majesty. Silence here isn't mere quiet but reverential worship, acknowledging God's absolute sovereignty and holiness. This verse transitions from chapter 2's woes against Babylon to chapter 3's prayer of faith. Having established God's sovereignty over idolatrous empires, Habakkuk now approaches Him in worship. The call to silence reminds all creation that before the living God, arguments cease, complaints quiet, and humble adoration alone remains appropriate.

Historical Context

The phrase 'the LORD is in his holy temple' would resonate with Judeans familiar with temple worship in Jerusalem. Yet the command for 'all the earth' to keep silence indicates God's presence transcends any earthly structure—His throne room is in heaven, His presence fills creation. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem's temple (586 BC), this truth became crucial: God's presence doesn't depend on buildings. He remains sovereign regardless of earthly circumstances. The exile taught Israel that God isn't limited to geography or architecture. This prepared for

the new covenant revelation that God dwells not in temples made with hands but in His people through the Spirit (Acts 7:48-49, 1 Corinthians 3:16). The call to silence echoes throughout Scripture (Psalm 46:10, Zechariah 2:13) as the posture appropriate before God's awesome presence.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically to 'keep silence before the LORD'—in worship, prayer, and daily life?
2. How does recognizing God's presence 'in his holy temple' (both heavenly and among His people) affect daily living?
3. Why is silence, rather than speech, sometimes the most appropriate response to God's holiness and majesty?

Interlinear Text

But the LORD	temple	is in his holy	keep silence	before	H3605
H3068	H1964	H6944	H2013	H6440	

כָּל מִפְתַּח יְהִי הָעָרָץ:
let all the earth

H776

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 2:13 (Holy): Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

Zephaniah 1:7 (References Lord): Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

Psalms 46:10 (Parallel theme): Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Psalms 11:4 (Holy): The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Isaiah 6:1 (Temple): In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Jonah 2:7 (Holy): When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

Micah 1:2 (Holy): Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

Psalms 115:3 (Parallel theme): But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Isaiah 66:1 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Isaiah 66:6 (Temple): A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompence to his enemies.