

Isaiah 57:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Analysis

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. This verse presents one of Scripture's most profound paradoxes: the transcendent God chooses intimate fellowship with the broken. The Hebrew *ram venissa* (רם ונשא, "high and lofty") emphasizes God's absolute elevation above creation, while "inhabiteth eternity" (*shoken ad*, שכן עד, literally means "dwelling in perpetuity"—existing outside temporal limitations.

"Whose name is Holy" (*qadosh shemo*, קדוש שמו) declares God's essential otherness and moral perfection. Yet this incomprehensible deity condescends to dwell with "the contrite" (*daka*, דָּכָא—crushed, broken) and "humble" (*shefal-ruach*, שפל-רוח—low in spirit). The verb "dwell" (*eshkon*, אָשְׁכֵן) is the same used for God's eternal habitation, indicating equally authentic presence.

"To revive" (*lehachayot*, לְהַחְיֶיךָ) means to bring to life, restore vitality. God's purpose in dwelling with the broken is restorative, not condemnatory. This verse refutes both human pride (God is infinitely above us) and despair (He intimately

near the humble). It establishes the theological foundation for incarnation—the High and Holy One tabernacling among humanity in Christ (John 1:14).

Historical Context

Isaiah prophesied during tumultuous times (740-681 BC) spanning reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Israel had divided into northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms. The northern kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC during Isaiah's ministry. Judah faced constant threat from surrounding nations and internal corruption.

Isaiah 57 forms part of the book's latter section (chapters 40-66), often called "Comfort" or "Deutero-Isaiah" by critical scholars, though traditional scholarship maintains unified authorship. These chapters address both immediate exile concerns and distant messianic hope. The contrast between God's transcendence and immanence would profoundly comfort exiled or threatened Israelites, assuring them that the Creator who seems distant actually draws near to the humble and contrite.

Ancient Near Eastern religions typically portrayed gods as capricious, demanding appeasement through elaborate rituals. Isaiah's revelation that Yahweh seeks the broken-hearted, not the externally religious, was revolutionary. This theme continues through prophets (Micah 6:6-8, Hosea 6:6) and culminates in Jesus' ministry to sinners and outcasts. The New Testament explicitly connects this passage to Christian humility (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5-6).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's transcendence (high and holy) combined with His immanence (dwelling with the humble) shape our worship?
2. What constitutes true contrition and humility versus false or performative humility?
3. Why does God specifically choose to dwell with the broken rather than the confident or successful?
4. How does this passage inform our understanding of God's grace in the gospel?
5. In what ways does modern culture resist the humility that invites God's presence?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	כֹה	אָמַר	רַם	וְנֹשָׂא	אֲשָׁכַח	עַד	וְקָדוֹשׁ
H3588	H3541						
		For thus saith	the high	and lofty One	I dwell	eternity	and holy
		H559	H7311	H5375	H7931	H5703	H6918
שְׁמוֹ	וּמִרְמָה	וְקָדוֹשׁ	אֲשָׁכַח	וְאֵת			
whose name	in the high	and holy	I dwell				
H8034	H4791	H6918	H7931	H854			
		וְכֵן		וְשָׁפֵל	רוּחַ	וְלִהְיוֹת	רוּחַ
		place with him also that is of a contrite	and humble	spirit	and to revive	spirit	
		H1793	H8217	H7307	H2421	H7307	
וְשָׁפֵל	וְלִהְיוֹת	לֵב	נִדְכָּאִים:				
and humble	and to revive	the heart	of the contrite ones				
H8217	H2421	H3820	H1792				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 34:18 (Spirit): The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 138:6 (Parallel theme): Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Psalms 147:3 (Parallel theme): He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

Exodus 15:11 (Holy): Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Daniel 4:34 (Parallel theme): And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

Isaiah 52:13 (Parallel theme): Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Isaiah 40:28 (Parallel theme): Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Psalms 90:2 (Parallel theme): Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Psalms 83:18 (Parallel theme): That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

Deuteronomy 33:27 (Parallel theme): The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.