

Micah 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Micah summons heaven and earth as cosmic witnesses to God's lawsuit against His people. "Hear, all ye people" (shim'u ammim kullam) addresses not just Israel but all nations—God's judgment will demonstrate His character and justice before the watching world. The verb "hearken" (haq shiv) intensifies the call to attention —this isn't casual listening but urgent, attentive hearing that demands response. "O earth, and all that therein is" (erets umelo'ah) encompasses all creation, echoing covenant lawsuit language from Deuteronomy 32:1 and Psalm 50:1-6 where heaven and earth serve as witnesses.

"And let the Lord GOD be witness against you" introduces judicial metaphor. The Hebrew 'ed (witness) is legal terminology—God appears not merely as judge but as witness bringing testimony against defendants. Normally, witnesses are third parties, but here God is simultaneously prosecutor, witness, and judge—a combination emphasizing Israel's absolute accountability. "The Lord from his holy temple" (Adonai mehekhal qodsho) specifies the heavenly temple, God's transcendent dwelling, from which He oversees earth and executes judgment.

This theophany formula prepares for God's dramatic appearance in verses 3-4 where He descends, mountains melt, and valleys split. Such cosmic disturbance accompanies divine judgment throughout Scripture (Judges 5:4-5; Psalm 68:8, 97:2-5; Habakkuk 3:3-15; Nahum 1:2-8). The imagery communicates both God's transcendent majesty and His active intervention in history. He isn't distant or

unconcerned but personally engaged, coming from His holy dwelling to address covenant violation and execute justice.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaty forms inform this passage. Suzerain-vassal treaties (like Hittite treaties Israel knew) typically invoked heaven and earth as witnesses to covenant terms. If vassals violated treaty, the witnesses could testify against them. Deuteronomy 4:26, 30:19, and 31:28 similarly call heaven and earth as witnesses to Israel's covenant with Yahweh. Micah employs this recognized legal formula, presenting God's case against covenant-breaking Israel.

The phrase "all ye people" (ammim kullam) has dual meaning. Primarily it addresses Israel/Judah, but secondarily it warns surrounding nations that God's judgment begins with His own people (1 Peter 4:17) but will ultimately encompass all nations. Micah's oracles include judgments on nations (Micah 5:15), demonstrating God's universal sovereignty. Israel's judgment serves as warning to all earth: the God who judges His own people will certainly judge those who don't know Him.

The emphasis on God's "holy temple" contrasts earthly sanctuaries (Jerusalem's temple, Israel's rival shrines at Bethel/Dan) with heaven's true temple. While Israel offered sacrifices in earthly temples, God observes from His heavenly dwelling and finds their worship abominable because divorced from justice and righteousness (Micah 6:6-8). True worship acknowledges God's transcendent holiness and responds with obedient, just living—not mere ritual divorced from ethics.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does God's summoning of heaven and earth as witnesses teach about the cosmic significance of covenant faithfulness or unfaithfulness?
2. How should the reality that God observes from His holy temple shape our understanding of worship and daily conduct?
3. In what ways does God's judgment of His own people serve as warning to the broader world?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים שְׁמָעוּ עַמּוּד מִצְרַיִם אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
Hear all ye people H3605 hearken O earth and all that therein H1961

מִתְּהִיכָּה לְאַדְנָה אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּכָמָת לְעֵד בְּכָמָת
against you the Lord GOD H0 be witness against you the Lord temple H1964

מִלְשָׁן
from his holy H6944

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:2 (References Lord): Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

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.

Revelation 3:13 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 3:22 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Revelation 2:7 (References God): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Psalms 50:7 (Witness): Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

Jeremiah 22:29 (References Lord): O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

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.

Habakkuk 2:20 (Holy): But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Malachi 3:5 (Witness): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.