

Micah 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.

Analysis

And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft (venimasu heharim tachtav vecha'amaqim yitbaqqa'וְנִמְסוּ הַהָרִים תַּחְתָּיו וְהַעֲמָקִים יִתְבַּקְּעוּ). This theophany depicts God's descent for judgment with catastrophic cosmic effects. Masas (מָסַס, "melt") describes solid matter liquefying—mountains, symbols of permanence and stability, dissolve like wax. Baqa (בָּקַע, "split/cleave") means violent rupturing—valleys tear apart. The preposition "under him" (tachtav) shows creation responding to the weight and power of God's presence.

As wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place (kadonag mippene ha'esh kamayim muggaim bemored, כַּדֹּנָג מִיפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ כַּמַּיִם מִגֵּגַיִם בְּמֹרֵד, מְגִירִים בְּמֹרֵד). Two similes intensify the imagery. Wax melting before fire illustrates utter dissolution—what seemed solid becomes liquid, losing all form and strength. Waters cascading down a steep slope depict overwhelming, unstoppable force sweeping everything away. Together these images communicate that when God appears in judgment, nothing can withstand Him—not mountains, not valleys, not any created thing.

This theophany echoes similar passages (Judges 5:4-5; Psalm 97:5; Nahum 1:5; Habakkuk 3:6, 10). The imagery isn't merely poetic but theological: God's presence is so holy, powerful, and awesome that creation itself cannot endure it. If mountains melt and valleys split at His coming, how much less can sinful humans

stand? This prepares for specific judgments (vv. 5-7) by establishing God's irresistible power.

Historical Context

Micah prophesied during the late 8th century BC when Assyria dominated the ancient Near East. Israel (Northern Kingdom) faced imminent judgment for covenant violation, idolatry, and social injustice. The theophanic imagery recalls Mount Sinai's earthquake and fire when God gave the Law (Exodus 19:16-18), establishing continuity between Sinai covenant and prophetic judgment. The description also anticipates the Day of the LORD—ultimate eschatological judgment when God will shake not only earth but heaven (Hebrews 12:26-29). Christ's second coming will be accompanied by cosmic upheaval (Matthew 24:29-31; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Revelation 6:12-17).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the image of mountains melting before God challenge our tendency to trust in earthly securities that seem permanent?
2. What does creation's violent response to God's presence teach about the seriousness of sin and judgment?
3. How should the certainty that nothing can withstand God's judgment affect our evangelistic urgency and holy living?

Interlinear Text

וְנִמְּסוּ	הַהָרִים	תַּחֲתָיו	וְהַעֲמָלִים		
shall be molten	And the mountains	H8478	under him and the valleys		
H4549	H2022		H6010		
וְיִתְבַּקְּ עוֹ	כַּדֹּוֹנֶג	מִפְּנֵי י	הָאֵשׁ	כַּמַּיִם	מִגֵּרִים
shall be cleft	as wax	before	the fire	and as the waters	that are poured
H1234	H1749	H6440	H784	H4325	H5064
בְּמוֹקֵד:					
down a steep place					
H4174					

Additional Cross-References

Nahum 1:5 (Parallel theme): The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

Psalms 97:5 (Parallel theme): The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

Amos 9:5 (Parallel theme): And the Lord GOD of hosts is he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.

Habakkuk 3:6 (Parallel theme): He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.

Habakkuk 3:10 (Parallel theme): The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

Judges 5:4 (Parallel theme): LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

