

# 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** (וְנִמְסֹׁו הַהֲרִים מְתֻמָּתִי וְכָלָמִים יִתְבָּאַקְקָה, u, וְכָלָמִים יִתְבָּאַקְקָה). This theophany depicts God's descent for judgment with catastrophic cosmic effects. *Masas* (מִסָּה, "melt") describes solid matter liquefying—mountains, symbols of permanence and stability, dissolve like wax. *Baqa* (בָּקָע, "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** (פָּדוֹנָג מִפְּנֵי פָּאַשׁ כְּתָמִים בְּמֹכֶד). 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

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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

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**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

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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

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וְשָׁmolְתָה יְהֹם סָלֵךְ  
shall be molten And the mountains

H4549

בְּרִים תִּחְמַץ יְהֹם

H2022

תִּחְמַץ יְהֹם

H8478

וְשָׁמְלָק יְמִינֵךְ וְשָׁמְלָק יְמִינֵךְ  
under him and the valleys

H6010

וְשָׁבֵת עַל מִפְּנֵי פְּדוּנָג בָּא שָׁבֵת כְּמֵם יְמִינֵךְ  
shall be cleft as wax before the fire and as the waters that are poured

H1234

H1749

H6440

H784

H4325

H5064

בְּמֹרֶךְ:  
down a steep place

H4174

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

