

Micah 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

Analysis

Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. This verse opens God's covenant lawsuit (rib) against Israel. The imperative "hear" demands attention. "Contend" uses legal terminology for bringing a lawsuit—God formally charges His people with covenant violation. The mountains and hills serve as witnesses, recalling Deuteronomy 4:26 and 32:1 where Moses invoked heaven and earth as witnesses.

Why summon inanimate creation? Because Israel's covenant violation affects all creation—the land itself vomits out sin (Leviticus 18:25). Mountains and hills testify to God's faithfulness and Israel's rebellion. The courtroom metaphor emphasizes legal accountability—Israel broke covenant terms and faces prosecution before cosmic witnesses who cannot be bribed.

The phrase "let the hills hear thy voice" personalizes creation, suggesting even non-human elements respond more faithfully to God than His covenant people. Mountains stand firm; hills endure; they fulfill their created purpose. But Israel rebels. Jesus later observes that if disciples stayed silent, "the stones would cry out" (Luke 19:40). Creation bears witness to God's glory and humanity's guilt.

Historical Context

Micah 6:1-8 presents a rib (covenant lawsuit) pattern found throughout prophetic literature (Isaiah 1:2-20; Jeremiah 2:4-13; Hosea 4:1-3). God charges Israel with

breaking covenant terms given at Sinai. The historical setting is 8th century BC Judah. Despite possessing God's law and temple worship, Judah violated covenant through social injustice and corrupt leadership. Invoking mountains recalls Israel's covenant history—Sinai shook when God gave the law (Exodus 19:18). Throughout Israel's history, mountains witnessed God's mighty acts and their covenant commitments.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does God's formal lawsuit teach about the seriousness of covenant violation?
2. How does creation's witness against human sin challenge modern complacency?
3. In what ways does creation's faithfulness expose humanity's rebellion?

Interlinear Text

קָרְבָּן אָמֵן רֹאשׁ עַתָּה אַתָּה יְהֹוָה הָיָה אָשָׁר אַתָּה אַתָּה
Hear H4994 H853 H834 ye now what the LORD saith Arise
H8085

קָרְבָּן אָמֵן רֹאשׁ עַתָּה אַתָּה יְהֹוָה הָיָה אָשָׁר אַתָּה
contend H854 thou before the mountains Hear and let the hills thy voice
H7378 H2022 H8085 H1389 H6963

Additional Cross-References

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

Deuteronomy 32:1 (Parallel theme): Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Micah 1:2 (References Lord): 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.

Ezekiel 36:1 (References Lord): Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD:

Psalms 50:4 (Parallel theme): He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Deuteronomy 4:26 (Parallel theme): I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

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.

Ezekiel 36:8 (Parallel theme): But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.

Luke 19:40 (Parallel theme): And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

Psalms 50:1 (References Lord): The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.