

# Psalms 114:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

## Analysis

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**Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;** After describing creation's response to God during the Exodus (seas fleeing, mountains skipping), the psalmist issues a command to all earth: tremble at God's presence. This verse serves as the psalm's theological climax, calling universal recognition of divine majesty.

"Tremble" (חָלַל/chuli) means writhe, whirl, dance, be in anguish, shake with fear. The same verb describes labor pains (Psalm 29:8) and fear before enemies (Deuteronomy 2:25). It captures both reverential awe and appropriate fear. Earth's trembling isn't mere physical earthquake but conscious recognition of standing before infinitely holy, powerful Creator.

"Thou earth" (אֶרֶץ/eretz) addresses all creation. The singular noun emphasizes unified response—entire planet, whole creation, all nature. This isn't localized phenomenon (Red Sea alone) but universal reality. Everywhere, at all times, creation stands in God's presence and should respond accordingly.

"At the presence of the Lord" (מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדֹנָי/milifnei Adon) uses Adon (Master, Sovereign) rather than Yahweh. This title emphasizes authority and ownership. The phrase "from before the face of" conveys standing in direct presence, under scrutiny, before authority. There's no hiding, no distance, no casual approach.

"At the presence of the God of Jacob" parallels the previous phrase, now using

Eloha (God) with covenant designation "of Jacob." This combines transcendent power (Eloha) with covenant relationship (Jacob). The God before whom earth trembles isn't distant cosmic force but covenant-keeping God who revealed Himself to patriarchs, made promises, and keeps commitments. He is simultaneously awesomely transcendent and intimately immanent.

## Historical Context

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Trembling before divine presence appears throughout Scripture. At Sinai, "the whole mount quaked greatly" when God descended (Exodus 19:18). When Ark returned from Philistines, Beth-shemites experienced deadly consequences for irreverence (1 Samuel 6:19). Uzzah died touching Ark (2 Samuel 6:6-7). These incidents demonstrate holy God's presence produces—and requires—reverential fear.

Ancient Near Eastern peoples understood divine theophanies (visible appearances) involved terrifying natural phenomena. Baal worship included storm imagery. Yet these were attributed to capricious, manipulable deities. In contrast, Yahweh's appearances demonstrated consistent character: holy, just, faithful, powerful beyond all other gods.

Prophets described coming Day of the Lord with earthquake imagery. "The earth shall quake before them" (Joel 2:10). "I will shake the heavens and the earth" (Haggai 2:6). These prophetic visions anticipated not merely physical earthquakes but comprehensive cosmic response to God's revealed presence and judgment.

Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection involved earthquake phenomena (Matthew 27:51; 28:2), demonstrating creation's recognition of these epochal events. Revelation's visions include earthquakes accompanying divine judgments (Revelation 6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 16:18). Thus Psalm 114's call for earth to tremble anticipates eschatological fulfillment.

The title "God of Jacob" emphasizes covenant faithfulness across generations. God didn't just appear to Jacob once but remained "the God of Jacob" perpetually. He identified Himself with this flawed, deceptive man who wrestled with Him and

prevailed (Genesis 32:24-30). This assures believers: the awesome God before whom creation trembles is the same God who enters covenant with imperfect people.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How should awareness of standing continually 'at the presence of the Lord' affect daily life, decisions, and attitudes?
2. What is the relationship between reverential fear (trembling) and intimate relationship (God of Jacob)?
3. Why does God want creation to tremble before Him, and how is this different from terrorizing intimidation?
4. How do Christians balance celebrating God's gracious accessibility through Christ with maintaining appropriate reverence and holy fear?

## Interlinear Text

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מִלְּפָנֶיךָ י	אֵל דּוֹן	ח וְלִי	אֶרֶץ	מִלְּפָנֶיךָ י	אֵל וִהִ
at the presence	of the Lord	Tremble	thou earth	at the presence	of the God
H6440	H113	H2342	H776	H6440	H433

יִשְׁקֹב:

of Jacob

H3290

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 104:32** (Parallel theme): He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

**Jeremiah 5:22** (References Lord): Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

**Job 26:11** (Parallel theme): The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.

**Psalms 96:9** (References Lord): O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

**Psalms 77:18** (Parallel theme): The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

**Job 9:6** (Parallel theme): Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.