

Psalms 76:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

Analysis

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, This verse describes theophany—God's dramatic self-revelation in judgment. **"Judgment"** (דִּין/din) denotes legal verdict pronounced from the divine court. **"From heaven"** emphasizes transcendence—God speaks from His throne above earthly powers. Heaven's verdict overrules earth's arrogant claims.

"To be heard" (הִשְׁמָעָה/hishma'ta) is causative—God caused His judgment to be audible, unmistakable. This recalls Sinai's thunderous revelation (Exodus 19:16-19) and anticipates eschatological judgment when every ear will hear (Revelation 1:7). Divine judgment isn't silent or ambiguous; it declares itself with authority that commands attention.

"The earth feared, and was still" depicts universal response to divine intervention. **"Feared"** (יָרָא/yare'ah) is the trembling awe appropriate before the holy Judge. **"Was still"** (שָׁקֵט/shaqatah) means to be quiet, calm, or at rest—not the peace of safety but the silence of terror. All creation holds its breath before the terrible majesty of God's judgment. Human boasting ceases; earthly tumult stills.

Historical Context

The cosmic language ('earth feared') suggests not merely local impact but universal significance. When God destroyed Sennacherib's army, surrounding nations took notice—the God of Israel defended His people against history's

mightiest empire. The Assyrian records themselves (Taylor Prism) admit Sennacherib's failure to capture Jerusalem, though they don't acknowledge divine intervention. For Israel, this vindication proved God's sovereignty over all nations, fulfilling promises that through Abraham's seed all earth would be blessed or judged (Genesis 12:3).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How should the certainty of God's future judgment 'from heaven' affect your daily priorities and moral choices?
2. What does it mean for 'the earth' to be 'still' before God's judgment—what kind of silence does divine authority command?
3. How can believers maintain proper fear of God's judgment while resting in Christ's redemption?

Interlinear Text

מִן שָׁמַיִם הָשָׁמָ עֲתָה

from heaven

H8064

הָשָׁמָ עֲתָה

to be heard

H8085

דָּ יָ

Thou didst cause judgment

H1779

אֶרֶץ הָאָרֶץ

the earth

H776

יָרָא הָאָרֶץ

feared

H3372

וַיִּשְׁקֹטָהּ:

and was still

H8252

Additional Cross-References

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

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