

Zephaniah 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

Analysis

The command 'Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD' (has mip-peney Adonai YHWH) demands reverential silence before divine judgment. This isn't mere quietness but awestruck recognition of God's sovereign majesty and righteous wrath. The 'day of the LORD' arrives with sacrificial imagery: God has prepared a sacrifice (zebah) and consecrated His guests (qadash)—ironic language where Israel becomes the sacrifice and invading armies the guests. This reverses Israel's privileged position, showing that covenant relationship brings heightened accountability. The silence called for resembles Habakkuk 2:20's 'let all the earth keep silence before him'—appropriate response when the Holy Judge acts.

Historical Context

Zephaniah prophesied during Josiah's reign (640-609 BC), likely before his reforms (622 BC). Judah had endured Manasseh's wickedness (longest and most evil reign) followed by Amon's brief apostasy. Though Josiah pursued revival, deep-rooted idolatry persisted among the people. Zephaniah warned of coming Babylonian invasion (executed in 605, 597, and 586 BC) using Day of the LORD theology—God's decisive intervention in history to judge evil and vindicate righteousness. The prophet's noble lineage (traced to Hezekiah) gave him access to royal court and authority to speak boldly.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Do I approach God with appropriate reverence and holy fear, or with casual presumption?
2. How does the certainty of divine judgment shape my understanding of grace and my urgency in evangelism?

Interlinear Text

הַ ס	מִפְנֵי י	אֲדֹנָי	יְהוָה ה	כִּי י	קָרוֹב	יּוֹם
Hold thy peace	at the presence	of the Lord	GOD	H3588	is at hand	for the day
H2013	H6440	H136	H3069		H7138	H3117
יְהוָה ה	כִּי	הֵכֵן	יְהוָה ה	זֶבַח	הִקְדִּי יֵשׁ	
for the LORD	H3588	hath prepared	for the LORD	a sacrifice	he hath bid	
H3068		H3559	H3068	H2077	H6942	
קִרְאֵיוֹ:						
his guests						
H7121						

Additional Cross-References

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

Zechariah 2:13 (References Lord): Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

Isaiah 34:6 (Sacrifice): The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Jeremiah 46:10 (Sacrifice): For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

Zephaniah 1:14 (References Lord): The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

Isaiah 13:6 (References Lord): Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Isaiah 2:12 (References Lord): For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

Matthew 22:4 (Parallel theme): Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

Joel 2:31 (References Lord): The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

1 Samuel 16:5 (Sacrifice): And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.