IBH 36.7, Section C, Jer 4:23–26

Translation	Hebrew Text
[23]I looked at the earth, and behold, (it) (was) formless and void. And (I looked) to the heavens, and they had no light.	23 רָאִיתִי[1] אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ[2] וְאֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם[3] וְאֵין אוֹרָם:
[24]I looked at the mountains, and behold, (they) (were) quaking, and all the hills trembled/were shaken.	24 רָאִיתִי הֶהָרִים וְהִנֵּה רֹעֲשִׁים[4] וְכָל הַגְּבָעוֹת הִתְקַלְקָלוּ:[5]
[25]I looked, and behold, there was no man, and every bird of the heavens fled (or 'had fled').	25 רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה אֵין הָאָדָם וְכָל עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם נָדָדוּ:[6]
[26]I looked, and behold, the fruitful place (was) the wilderness, and all its cities were broken/torn down before YHWH, before his burning anger.	26 רָאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה הַכַּרְמֶל הַמִּדְבָּר[7] וְכָל עָרָיו נִתְּצוּ[8] מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ: ס

---

[1] ראה Qal pft 1cs, 'to see, look at'. Note the parallel structure, where this verb in the identical form occurs begins each verse in this passage.

[2] This expression, תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, appears to intentionally evoke Gen 1:2. Whereas YHWH had formed the orderly creation out of the chaos of 'formless and void', here Israel has become 'formless and void'. This is a decreation theme. At the end of the creation week, God makes man, אָדָם. But here, Jeremiah looks but cannot see הָאָדָם!

[3] In this clause, the verb and its subject are elliptical (or gapped) from the prior clause. Thus, we should supply the verb רָאִיתִי, such that the אֶל-PP is adverbial to this implied verb: 'I look to the heavens….'

[4] רעשׁ Qal ptc mp abs. 'to shake, quake'. This is a predicate participle in a null-copula clause (that is, the copula 'was' is unstated but implied); the S (subject) is also null, but given the context we can recover it easily as 'the mountains'.

[5] Ross tells you this verb means 'trembled'. Its parsing is difficult because this comes from a rare verbal stem: קלל Hithpalpel pft 3cp 'to be shaken, to be jolted to and fro'.

[6] נדד Qal pft 3cp 'to flee, escape'. Even though the word for 'bird' is singular, when used with כֹּל ('every bird') it takes on a plural sense; hence the 3cp verbal inflection.

[7] Again, we have a null-copula (or verbless) clause where the copula 'was' is implied but unwritten.

[8] נתץ Ni pft 3cp 'to be pulled/torn down, to be ruined'. The nun that's visible here in נִתְּצוּ is the Niphal prefix-nun, and the R1-nun has assimilated to the taw (thus the DF).