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Dear Associates and Friends,

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“[The Book of Amos](#)” is the subject of this month’s article. The greater portion of this article is the transcript from a 1996 lecture by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. I added additional material about Amos at the end. In this Newsletter I want to give information about three references to God’s power in creation discussed in Amos. This information is presented with knowledge of other biblical creation accounts in Genesis, Job, Psalm 104, and other books of the Old Testament.

So why does God present such information in the Book of Amos, which focuses primarily on sin, repeated requests that Israel repent, threats of judgment and destruction, and eventual restoration? Look at the passages side-by-side. The translation is from the literal New American Standard Bible:

Amos 4:13, NASB	Amos 5:8–9, NASB	Amos 9:5–6, NASB
<p>“For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind, And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness, And treads on the high places of the earth, <u>YHWH God of hosts is His name.</u>”</p> <p>[italics for emphasis]</p>	<p>“He who made the Pleiades and Orion And changes deep darkness into morning, [He] Who also darkens day into night, [He] Who calls for the waters of the sea And [He who] pours them out on the surface of the earth, <u>YHWH is His name.</u></p> <p>It is He who flashes forth with destruction upon the strong, So that destruction comes upon the fortress.”</p>	<p>“The Lord <u>YHWH of hosts, The One</u> who touches the land so that it melts, And all those who dwell in it mourn, And all of it rises up like the Nile And subsides like the Nile of Egypt;</p> <p>The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens And has founded His vaulted dome over the earth, He who calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth, <u>YHWH is His name.</u>”</p>

These separated passages in Amos are thought to be part of a single song, although scholars do not know how the parts fit together, or even if this is a small part or a large part of the song.¹ It is impossible to know, although the common reference to YHWH’s name is quite interesting.

» **Amos 4:13** comes at the end of 5 calls for Israel to return to YHWH (as Dr. Martin shows in this month’s article). Immediately before verse 13 is verse 12 (KJV): “**Therefore thus will I do unto you, O Israel: and because I will do this unto you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”** This final and direct threat from God (which comes after five levels of punishments) is supported in verse 13 with what? God declares His creative power. God is able to perform His judgments. He brought all creation and Israel into this world. He can take them out. His threats will not be ignored.

Note also in 4:13 the statement where YHWH, “... **declares to man [adam] what are His thoughts.”** Whose thoughts are being declared to man? Does man need to know that God knows his thoughts? Why would that matter? Or, are they God’s thoughts being declared to man? Scholars debate, but it means the

¹ James D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea–Jonah*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2011), p. 305.

latter, God declaring His thoughts to man.² God spent the prior chapters of Amos telling Israel what they were doing, what they were thinking, and why they were wrong. He knows their thoughts, and they know He knows. One purpose of Scripture is to tell man's failings and sins before God, so they can be changed to righteousness (eventually through Christ, of course).

YHWH is not "a God who isn't there." God communicates with those He chooses, when He chooses. So how does God communicate to the children of Adam? One way He communicates is through the signs in the heavens and creation which declare the glory of God (Psalm 19; Romans 1:20; and 2 Corinthians 4:6). God also communicates through His Word given through His prophets. Later, and at present, He communicates through His Son who is the Living Word of God (Hebrews 1:1–2) and the written Word of God.

» **Amos 5:8–9** talks about celestial, atmospheric, and terrestrial creations of God, showing His ability to perform His just punishments in spite of the puny strengths and powers of man. YHWH does all these things. God's powers to create and punish are broad, great, and swift.

» **Amos 9:5–6** focuses upon the surface of the earth, the land and the water. God's slightest touch causes great disruption, even changing the landscape dramatically and quickly. Or, God's slight touch brings life giving rain. Note also that the waters of the sea pour down upon the face of the earth. Amos understood from God the cycle of evaporation from the sea to clouds to the deposit of rain **"on the face of the earth."**

These passages are surely there to praise God, showing His power in creation. The creator God is unlike the other gods (other *elohim*, which do exist).³ He can punish the disobedient. As Creator, YHWH has the right to destroy what He creates or to kill whoever He chooses. After all, He has the power to resurrect all men, which He shall do in the future. This includes all mankind from Adam, all nations, even all from His own chosen people Israel (and Judah).

Thank You

Amos did not seek to be a prophet but God chose him. By all the information available Amos performed his job admirably. There is no other mention by YHWH, Jesus, or Bible authors about Amos, neither criticism nor praise. The work of Amos is simply set before us.

Likewise, you and I did not choose to be called by God, any more than we chose to be born as a descendant of Adam, born to the parents we had, our genetics from them, or being raised in our culture and society. All these were done without our knowledge. God did not ask for our approval. He is God.

One task we have been chosen to accomplish is to learn about God and Christ. ASK is helping as much as possible for you to do this task. In return, you have helped us to do this task for others. Thank you.

We all have been called to know the truths of God, to understand His love for us and all others from Adam. We have been chosen to have a "sneak preview" of God's ultimate truth. This is done through His opening your mind to receive and learn His plain and simple truths in Scripture about His plan for everyone.

You not only get a "sneak preview" but you have the opportunity, given by God, to experience the Kingdom of God a long time before most of mankind. This is what it means to have been chosen during our lives to know the thoughts of God. Thank you for helping ASK continue to help you learn God's thoughts.

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² Many statements throughout the Old Testament tell us God knows the thoughts of man. The most useful knowledge of God can only effectively come from Him alone. Amos 4:13 is similar to an earlier statement: **"Surely the Lord YHWH will do nothing, but he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets"** (Amos 3:7). The prophets communicated God's secrets to mankind.

"While God certainly knows our thoughts and motives (Jeremiah 11:20; Psalm 94:11) and can recognize false worship, the verb "reveals" (*maggid*) [in Amos 4:13] suggests revelation, not declaration." Quoted from Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, vol. 19B, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995) p. 94.

³ See my article "[Elohim and the Son of God - Part 1](#)" (the first of three), where I show that other "gods" exist.