

Amos 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:

Analysis

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion (עֹשֶׂה כִּימָה וְכֶסִּיל, oseh Khimah uKhesil)—after condemning injustice (v. 7), Amos declares God's identity as Creator. "Seven stars" (Khimah, כִּימָה) likely refers to the Pleiades star cluster. "Orion" (Khesil, כֶּסֶּל) is the constellation. Both appear together in Job 9:9, 38:31. God who created these celestial bodies controls cosmic order. The phrase **turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night** (vehophekh laboqer tsalmavet veyom layelah hechshikh, הִפֵּךְ לְבֹקֶר צֶלְמָוֶת וַיּוֹם לַיְלָה, הֶחֱשִׁיךְ) describes God's sovereign control over light and darkness. "Shadow of death" (tsalmavet, צֶלְמָוֶת) means deep darkness or death itself—God transforms it into morning light (salvation, deliverance). Yet He also darkens day into night (judgment, calamity).

The verse continues: **that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name** (haqore lemeimeihayam vayishpekhem al-penei ha'arets YHWH shemo, הִקְרָא לַמִּימֵי־הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ). God controls the hydrologic cycle—summoning sea waters and pouring rain upon earth. The climax "The LORD is his name" (YHWH shemo, יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ) reveals the Creator's identity as Yahweh, Israel's covenant God. This doxology

(repeated in 4:13, 5:8, 9:5-6) celebrates God's power and sovereignty, contrasting His cosmic authority with Israel's petty injustice.

Historical Context

Ancient peoples often worshiped celestial bodies and natural forces as deities. Israel's neighbors served Baal (storm/fertility god), Astarte (associated with Venus), and other astral deities. By celebrating Yahweh as Creator of stars, controller of day/night cycles, and sovereign over rain, Amos declares these forces aren't independent gods but Yahweh's servants. This echoes Genesis 1 where sun, moon, and stars are mere creatures, not deities. The doxologies in Amos (4:13, 5:8-9, 9:5-6) likely drew from existing hymnic material celebrating Yahweh as Creator. By placing these hymns within judgment oracles, Amos declares: the God who created the cosmos will judge His rebel people. If He controls stars, darkness, and seas, He certainly controls history and Israel's destiny.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does celebrating God as Creator of stars and controller of light/darkness relate to His moral governance and judgment?
2. Why does Amos interrupt judgment oracles with doxologies praising God's creative power?
3. What is the significance of declaring "The LORD [Yahweh] is his name" after describing cosmic sovereignty?

Interlinear Text

עֲשֵׂה ה	כִּימֶה ה	וְכָס יל	וְהִפֹּךְ ר	לִבֹּקֶר	
Seek him that maketh	the seven stars	and Orion	and turneth	into the morning	
H6213	H3598	H3685	H2015	H1242	
צֶלֶמַת יָת	וְיֹם	לַיְלָה	הַחֹשֶׁךְ יִרְ	הַקּוֹרֵא א	
the shadow of death	and maketh the day	with night	dark	that calleth	
H6757	H3117	H3915	H2821	H7121	
לַמֵּי	הַיָּם	וְיִשְׁפֹּךְ מ	עַל	פְּנֵי י	הָאֶרֶץ
for the waters	of the sea	and poureth them out	H5921	upon the face	of the earth
H4325	H3220	H8210		H6440	H776
יְהוָה ה	שְׁמוֹ:				
The LORD	is his name				
H3068	H8034				

Additional Cross-References

Amos 4:13 (Darkness): For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.

Job 9:9 (Parallel theme): Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

Amos 9:6 (References Lord): It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.

Psalms 104:20 (Darkness): Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

Amos 8:9 (Darkness): And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

Psalms 105:28 (Darkness): He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

Job 12:22 (Darkness): He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

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