

# Amos 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them;  
though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them  
down:

## Analysis

**Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down** אָמַתְּחָתְרֹו בְּשָׁאֹל מִשְׁמָן יְהָוָה—this verse articulates God's absolute sovereignty over all creation. Sheol (שָׁאֹל), the realm of the dead, represents the deepest conceivable depth, while shamayim (שָׁמַיִם, heaven) represents the highest height. The verb chatar (חָתַר, "dig/break through") suggests desperate escape attempts, while alah (עָלָה, "climb/ascend") implies striving for unreachable heights. Neither strategy works—God's yad (יָד, hand) reaches everywhere.

This passage profoundly influenced Psalm 139:7-12, which uses nearly identical language but transforms terror into comfort for the righteous: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" For covenant-breakers, God's omnipresence means inescapable judgment; for believers, it means unfailing protection. The theological principle is universal divine sovereignty—no spatial location, no cosmic realm, no dimension of reality lies outside God's governance. Paul echoes this in Romans 8:38-39, declaring nothing in all creation can separate believers from God's love in Christ—the same omnipresence that terrifies rebels comforts saints.

## Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern religions typically assigned different gods to different realms—sky gods, underworld gods, sea gods. Israel's neighbors believed one could

escape a deity's power by entering another god's domain. Amos demolishes this polytheistic worldview: Yahweh alone is God, sovereign over every realm. This anticipates monotheistic affirmations throughout Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 45:5-7; Jeremiah 23:23-24). The historical fulfillment came when Assyria scattered Israel across its empire (722 BC)—no geographical distance from the promised land prevented God's judgment from finding covenant-violators.

## Related Passages

## James 2:17 – Faith and works

## **Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith**

## Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

## **Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ**

## Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that no place exists outside God's sovereign reach affect how you think about sin, judgment, and accountability?
2. In what ways does Christ's descent to the dead and ascension to heaven (Ephesians 4:9-10) transform God's omnipresence from threat to promise for believers?

## Interlinear Text

אָמַר	יְחִתָּר וְ	בְּשָׂא וְלָ	מֵשָׁם	זֶה	מִקְרָב
H518 <b>Though they dig</b>	H2864	into hell	H8033	<b>thence shall mine hand</b>	take

וְאַם	וְעַל	בְּשָׁמָּה	מִשְׁמָּה	אוֹרִיךְם:
H518    them though they climb up	H5927	H8064    to heaven	H8033	the thence will I bring them down

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 51:53** (Parallel theme): Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

**Obadiah 1:4** (Parallel theme): Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.

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