

# 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** (אֲמַיְחַתְרוּ בְּשְׂאוֹל מִשָּׁם יָדִי (תִּקְחֵם וְאֲמַיַּעֲלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם אֹרִידֵם)—this verse articulates God's absolute sovereignty over all creation. Sheol (שְׂאוֹל), 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

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

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

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

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

## Study Questions

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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

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אִם H518	יִחְתְּרוּ וְ H2864	בְּשֵׂא וּלְ H7585	מִשָּׁם H8033	יָדִי H3027	תִּקְחוּ H3947
	Though they dig	into hell		thence shall mine hand	take
וְאִם H518	יַעֲלוּ H5927	הַשָּׁמַיִם H8064	מִשָּׁם H8033	אֲבִידֵם: H3381	
	them though they climb up	to heaven		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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