

Amos 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth (בָּנָה בְּשָׁמִים מַעַלְוֹתָיו אֶגְדָּתוֹ עַל-אָרֶץ יְסָדָה)—the verb banah (בָּנָה, build) describes God as cosmic architect. The ma'alot (מעלות, stories/chambers/stairs) refers to heavenly dwelling-places or stories (some translate "upper chambers"). The aguddah (אֶגְדָּה) means "vault/arch/foundation"—possibly the firmament or earth's foundation. **He that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name** (פְּקָרָא לְמַיִם־הַיּוֹם)—God controls the hydrological cycle, calling (qara, קָרָא) sea waters that He pours out (shaphak, שָׁפַק) as rain or flood.

This doxology affirms God as Creator and Sustainer of cosmic order—heaven above, earth below, waters completing the triad. The emphasis on God's name (שם, shem) being Yahweh connects creation theology to covenant identity: the same God who built the cosmos made covenant with Israel and will judge their violation. The passage echoes Genesis 1-2 (creation), Job 38 (God's cosmic governance), and Psalm 104 (God's sustaining providence). The Reformed understanding emphasizes God's meticulous providence—He doesn't merely create then step back but actively governs all natural processes. The waters don't move randomly but at His call, poured out where He wills.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cosmology envisioned a three-tiered universe: heaven above (divine dwelling), earth (human realm), and waters below/around (chaos). Amos affirms that Yahweh alone governs all three realms, contrasting with pagan gods who divided these domains. Baal, the Canaanite storm god, claimed authority over rain and fertility—Amos declares that Yahweh calls the waters and pours them out. This isn't poetic language but theological polemic: Israel's covenant God controls what pagans attribute to Baal. The seasonal rains essential for Palestinian agriculture obey Yahweh's call, not Baal's. Within 30 years, when Assyria destroyed Israel (722 BC), they would learn that Yahweh's control over creation extends to historical judgment.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God as both Creator (who built heaven's chambers and earth's vault) and Sustainer (who calls and pours the waters) affect your trust in His providential care?
2. What does the emphasis on 'the LORD is his name' teach about the inseparability of creation theology and covenant relationship?

Interlinear Text

בָּנָה הֵן	בְּשָׁמָם יְמִינָה	בְּשָׁמָם יְמִינָה וְ	מְעֻלָּות וְ	עַל	וְאַגְּדָת וְ	בְּאָרֶץ עַל	בְּאָרֶץ עַל
It is he that buildeth	in the heaven	his stories	his troop	H5921	in the earth		
H1129	H8064	H4609	H92		H776		
וְאַסְתַּדְתָּה אָזְדָתְךָ	בְּקָרָב אָזְדָתְךָ	לְמִי	בְּמִי	בְּשָׁפֵךְ מִ	בְּשָׁפֵךְ מִ		
and hath founded	he that calleth	for the waters	of the sea	and poureth them out			
H3245	H7121	H4325	H3220	H8210			
עַל	בְּאָרֶץ	בְּאָרֶץ	יְהִי הָשָׁׁם				
upon the face	in the earth	The LORD	is his name				
H6440	H776	H3068	H8034				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 104:3 (Parallel theme): Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Amos 5:8 (References Lord): 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:

Amos 4:13 (References Lord): 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.

Psalms 104:13 (Parallel theme): He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

Jeremiah 5:22 (References Lord): Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

Genesis 2:1 (Parallel theme): Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org