

The Lord Is His Name

INTRODUCTION:

1. As I was studying Amos of the minor prophets, I noticed three very interesting and similar phrases that peaked my interest.
 - A. Amos is a very stern book, with most of its emphasis upon the destruction coming upon the wicked of God's people as well as the wicked world.
 - B. Yet, these three hymns, found in contexts of judgment coming upon the wicked, are ones of great praise to God and quite telling as to who He is and His nature.
 - i. These short hymns of praise are simply called doxologies, meaning in *praise to God*.
 - ii. We have a song based on Habakkuk 2:20 called *Doxology* often sang to start our worship. It says, "The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."
2. What caught my attention in these doxologies was that they all ended with giving, or rather emphasizing, the name of God.
 - A. Amos 4:13 ends with "The LORD God of hosts *is* His name."
 - B. Amos 5:8 concludes with "The LORD *is* His name."
 - C. Amos 9:5-6 has "The LORD *is* His name," while also calling God "the Lord God of hosts."
3. What I want to do today is to consider these doxologies, their contexts and contents to learn about the God we serve and grow a bit more in appreciation and awe of His power and nature.

BODY:

- I. **Amos 4:13** – "For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought *is*, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth—The LORD God of hosts *is* His name."
 - A. "The LORD God of hosts *is* His name":
 1. Lord of Hosts – a compound name of Lord with Sabaoth, meaning a great host, or army for warfare, etc., causing some to translate it "LORD Almighty."
 - a. Sabaoth alone is used 486 times in reference to warfare, armies, and/or fighting. So, this is an important name of God to know.
 - b. For, God rules over ALL HOSTS, whether they are armies of heaven or of earth, they are at His beckoning call!
 2. So, this name references the infinite power at God's disposal to do His will in this world!
 - B. Context:
 1. The northern kingdom of Israel, Amos' main focus, had become so rebellious that even their women were wicked, living in luxury and drunkenness at the expense of the poor and needy (4:1-5).
 - a. As a result, God promises judgement in the form of defeat, destruction, and captivity by a cruel nation that would lead them away using fishhook in their skin to drag them.
 - b. This was coming despite their zeal to give sacrifice at *their* holy places where they offered contaminated offering and never considered their evil ways (4:4-5).
 2. Israel continued down this evil path despite God's withholding of the rain, bringing destruction on their crops by blight and locust, sending plagues among them, and even killing them with the sword (4:6-12).
 - a. When we read these, we are tempted to wonder how they would know this was of God.
 - b. Yet, they should have known because these curses were specifically promised by God to come upon them if they became faithless and disobedient (Deut. 28:15-25).
 3. Despite their acute knowledge of God's faithfulness in keeping His side of the covenant, He reminded them five times, "Yet you have not returned to Me" (Amos 4:6-12).
 - a. We see that God's love and longsuffering are often found, despite our blindness, in His chastisements in hopes of avoiding destruction, even as we discipline our children.
 - b. Yet, because of their persistent rebellion, destruction was now inevitable!
 - i. God does not tell them what He is going to do, but that He **IS** going to do it!
 - ii. What a scary thought to be summoned to meet God as the focus of His wrath...when such a meeting is so unnecessary and contrary to God's ultimate desire!

- iii. This is a definite warning to all who live in sin/rebellion—even if you continue to worship as did Israel—seeing God’s longsuffering will end!
 - iv. For, “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11-12) and *now* is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).
- C. The 1st Doxology: Here God’s destruction of the wicked is strangely, at least to our ears, assured by a song of praise to God (4:13).
- 1. To give all the greater emphasis to this judgement, Amos depicts God, the One who has promised this, as the Almighty and Omniscient, who creates prosperity and adversity.
 - a. He forms the mountains, creates the wind, and makes known the thoughts of men’s hearts.
 - i. His vast power does not preclude personal knowledge of each of us, being the searcher and judge of our heart and actions (Jer. 17:10 – “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.”).
 - ii. Nothing in their minds and lives would be hidden from Him—the Almighty.
 - b. That Jehovah makes the morning/dawn darkness describes the creative omnipotence of God in the turning of the earth on its axis, while how He treads the high places of the earth unimpeded addresses his almighty power and sovereignty over the earth.
 - c. The one described here: “The LORD God of hosts is His name!”
 - 2. Application: Each of us is going to have to decide just who God will be to us! Will He be a Sunday/Wed. exercise, or the One who created and controls all nature, who knows our heart/life, and the ruler of ALL HOSTS in heaven and on earth?
 - a. Will you praise him with your life, knowing He has the power to deliver His people, even those who return from sin to Him, to eternal salvation?
 - b. Or, will you live in rebellion only to praise Him in the face of His wrath in judgement?

II. Amos 5:8 – “He made the Pleiades and Orion; He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night; He calls for the waters of the sea And pours them out on the face of the earth; The LORD *is* His name.”

A. “The LORD is His name”

- 1. LORD – Jehovah, the self-Existent, eternal One; the Jewish national name for God.
- 2. This is a derivative of the name God revealed to Moses when God said, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14).
- 3. It addresses the most basic and ultimate fact of the universe—that God IS—the foundation upon which everything is built!

B. Context:

- 1. A lamentation, a dirge, of great sorrow and destruction is given to the nation of Israel in accordance with its sin (5:1-3).
 - a. Israel is the virgin of God, hearkening back to the time when she was cleansed, purified, and separated by God from the evil and falsehoods of the nations around her.
 - b. Yet, she had fallen and there was no one left to raise her up, seeing God’s longsuffering had ended due to their repeated failure to hold up their end of the covenant, requiring God to bring about their destruction/captivity (Deut. 4:25-26 – “When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger,²⁶ “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed.”).
- 2. A call to repentance is given to *individuals* within Israel, seeing the nation as a whole was unsalvageable (4:4-7).
 - a. Despite their overwhelming evil, God offers not merely the chance to remain alive, or to avoid perishing, but to possess true life (4:4-5).

- b. This salvation was not to be found in Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba, cities of idolatry and false worship, seeing they would be destroyed, but in God's truth and obedience.
 - c. Without repentance of sin and reformation of life God would bring judgment to devour **Joseph**, here used for Israel, and no one will be able to stop it (4:6).
 - d. For, they had turned justice to **wormwood** (fig. of turning justice into bitterness/nauseous) and lay **righteousness to rest** in the earth, which either means it is buried or that they trample it under foot (4:7).
- C. The 2nd Doxology: God's promise of judgment is assured by the glorious elements of God's nature found in this hymn of praise (5:8).
- 1. This doxology again speaks of the greatness of God in sharp contrast to the sinfulness of His people.
 - a. God is praised as the Creator of nature, the One who made the constellations **Pleiades** and **Orion**, the first dominating the spring and summer months, and the second the months of fall and winter.
 - b. His greatness is extolled in the change of "the shadow of death," or the extreme darkness of night, to the dawn of light in the morning, as well as changing the light of day to darkness, while controlling the water cycle to bring about rain upon the earth.
 - i. Although there is a sense of God's amazing power in bringing about the order of our world, in turning the salty waters of the sea into a blessing of rain that brings life and sustenance, there is much more to this.
 - ii. These words more closely address the judicial rule of the Almighty in the world.
 - i) He turns the darkness of death into light, the deepest misery into prosperity and health.
 - ii) He also darkens the bright day of prosperity into the blackest night of adversity, and calls to the waters of the sea to pour themselves over the earth like the flood, bringing destruction and mourning upon the ungodly.
 - c. The one described here: "The LORD is His name!"
 - 2. Application: God has power to bring salvation to the righteous/penitent, or destruction **against all, even the strongest**, who live in sinful opposition to His will.
 - a. This is to be a name of great comfort and confidence for those who fear and trust in Him, and of great terror to those who do not.
 - b. He is the self-Existing One who created the stars of the universe and controls the motion of the world, bringing blessings and cursing upon all according to His will, without fear of resistance from anyone or anything!
 - c. So, who will He be to you?

III. Amos 9:5-6 – "The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts, And all who dwell there mourn; All of it shall swell like the River, And subside like the River of Egypt. ⁶He who builds His layers in the sky, And has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth—The LORD *is* His name."

- A. "The LORD is His name" – Jehovah, the self-Existent, eternal One is the name of who does these things.
- B. Context:
 - 1. God is standing before, I believe, the altar of the temple in Jerusalem, the only real altar for Judah and Israel, to pronounce judgment that would apply to both (9:1)!
 - a. God commands the door of the temple to be struck so that it collapses from **doorposts**, or capitals of the pillars, to **threshold**, or foundation.
 - b. This door symbolizes the house of Israel, now so perverted and polluted with sin that it must be brought down, slain by the sword.
 - c. The vision presents the idea that the whole nation is assembled before the Lord at the threshold of the temple, so that it is buried under the ruins of the falling building.
 - 2. It is made fearfully clear that no one will escape God's righteous judgment (9:2-4).

- a. Whether they dig into Sheol or climb to heaven, whether they ascend to the summit of Mt. Carmel or hide on the floor of the sea, or even go into captivity, God will bring death and destruction upon them.
 - b. For, when He has set his eyes on them to do so, there is no escaping it!
- C. The 3rd doxology: The assurance of the fulfillment of this judgment is again presented by a hymn of praise for God's fearful, even terrible, wrath against sin as well as His almighty power to bring about his judgments (9:5-6)
- 1. The Lord is said to touch the earth and it melts, referring to God's devastating judgment brought upon the earth, bringing mourning even by His word (Psa. 46:6 – "The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted."):
 - a. His judgment would rise up like a flood, drowning the country, laying it under water.
 - b. He brings judgment and it covers all, just as the Nile of Egypt does!
 - 2. That God builds his layers/stairs in the heavens and founded the strata/arch/dome of the earth appears to refer to God's ability to use the firmament around the earth to hold great stores of water, like a castle in the clouds, to then open it up to bring about a worldwide flood in devastating judgment upon the wicked as in Noah's day.
 - 3. What a great and mighty, truly righteous God that passes this sentence upon even His people who have rebelled and forgotten Him, and will take the executing of it into his own hands.
 - a. Threats are more or less formidable according to the power of him that threatens.
 - b. We laugh at impotent wrath; but the wrath of God is not so; it is omnipotent wrath!
 - c. Remember: "The LORD is His name!"
 - 4. Application: Do you understand, truly know, the power and fire of God's wrath upon the wicked, even of His people, and, therefore, His extreme desire for all to repent, return to Him, and be saved?
 - a. I am reminded of the words of God's pleading in Ezekiel (Ezek. 18:30-32 – "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. ³¹ "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? ³² "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!").
 - b. Who will the LORD be to you?

CONCLUSION:

- 1. I remind you that as is repeated in all three doxologies, "The LORD (*Jehovah*) is His name," the name of the one and only God who we must faithfully serve.
- 2. This name represents his eternal nature, authority, power, and complete control over all his creation.
- 3. There is no doubt that he can do what he has both promised for the faithful and what He has threatened to the rebellious.
- 4. But, lest you leave with the wrong impression of Amos, or especially of God, I remind you that the book concludes in chapter 9 with a promise that after the destruction of the wicked would come a time of salvation, a time of repairing of the ruins, a time of renewal, peace, and great blessings for all the world, even the Gentiles, fulfilled in the amazing grace of the Messiah (Amos 9:11-15).
- 5. So, who will God be to you—your prosecutor and judge...or your defense and Savior?