

Doxologies From Amos

INTRODUCTION:

1. In the final quarter of this year we have plans to study the minor prophets.
 - A. The book of Amos, of course, is one of the books we will study.
 - B. Amos is a very stern book, with most of its emphasis upon the destruction coming upon the wicked of God's people.
 - C. Yet, within this book are *short hymns of praise to God* found in this *contexts of judgment* that say much about our God.
 - i. These short hymns of praise are called *doxologies*.
 - ii. We have a song based on Habakkuk 2:20 called *Doxology* that when I was a kid was often sang to start our worship. It says, "The LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him," which is fitting considering the attitude needed to approach God.
2. What caught my attention in these doxologies was that they all ended with emphasizing God's name, which is Yahweh/Jehovah.
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

A. Context:

1. This begins with the 2nd of three imperatives to "hear the word" of God spoken against them (3:1; 4:1) the last being a lamentation (5:1).
2. The northern kingdom's rebellion was such that their women are condemned.
 - a. They are called "cows of Bashan" and condemned for living in luxury, pleasure, and drunkenness while they oppress/crush the poor and needy (4:1-3; 2:6-7 – "Thus says the Lord, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. ⁷ "These who pant after the very dust of the earth on the head of the helpless also turn aside the way of the humble...").
 - b. As a result God makes a divine oath of their judgement *in the coming days* in defeat, destruction, and captivity by a cruel nation leading them away through the walls that are so damaged that there is no need for gates, and they lead them by ropes with hooks!
3. They are sarcastically needled to go **transgress** in offering *your sacrifices* and *tithes* at Bethel and Gilgal, indicating God's view of the "worship" of the rebellious (4:4-5).
4. Israel experienced God's grace in His increasingly strong disciplinary actions against them in hopes of their repentance (4:6-12).
 - a. Discipline begin with famine, then drought in different cities (thirst, confusion), blight, mildew, insects (crops not spared), plagues like in Egypt (reversing of the Exodus), wartime scourges of pestilence, sword, captivity, and the stench of the rotting dead (people not spared), and finally destruction of some of their cities in the fashion of Sodom and Gomorrah (cities not spared), though God still plucked them from the fire!
 - b. Yet, their obstinance remained and is emphasized in the five-fold repetition of "Yet you have not returned to Me."
 - c. So, for the sensuality of Samaria's women (4:1-3), their empty, self-centered rituals at Bethel and Gilgal (4:4-5), and their refusal to repent (4:6-11) they are told to "prepare to meet your God, O Israel" (4:12)!
 - i. What a horrifying thought to be summoned to meet God as the focus of His wrath!
 - ii. This is a definite warning for all who partake of His grace. For as Titus says, "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to **deny ungodliness and worldly desires** and to **live sensibly, righteously and godly** in the present age." (Titus 2:11-12)

- B. What follows is the 1st Doxology (4:13 – “For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, the LORD God of hosts is His name.”).
1. God is to be both feared and praised because:
 - a. He is the *Creator*, the one who formed the mountains and creates the wind. Who, therefore, can withstand His power? No one!
 - b. His vast power does not exclude a desire to reveal His thought to us, to have a relationship with us. What an amazing God!
 - c. He brings judgment, making dawn into darkness, and treading down the high places of the earth.
 2. The doxology concludes with “The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.”
 - a. LORD God of hosts – a compound name of Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth.
 - i. Though we will deal with *Yahweh Elohim* shortly, I want to focus on Sabaoth.
 - ii. Sabaoth refers to great hosts, or armies, for warfare, etc., causing some to translate it “LORD Almighty.”
 - iii. Sabaoth is used 486 times in reference to warfare, armies, and/or fighting, presenting a fearful aspect of God’s power coming against the rebellious.
 - b. Application:
 - i. Unselfish charity is of great importance to God. We, as blessed people, must be keenly aware of this. God does not look kindly on self-centered selfishness.
 - ii. Like Israel, each of us is going to have to decide who God will be to us!
 - i) Will you refuse to come or return to Him? If so, prepare to meet your God!
 - ii) Or will you come or return to Him as your Creator that you might know the sweetness of His grace as your Savior?

II. Amos 5:8-9

A. Context:

1. The tone of this third judgment speech separates it from what has come before in that Amos laments, speaking in a dirge (5:1–3), urgently and passionately admonishing without sarcasm (5:4–6), and offering the real, yet remote, possibility of rescue (vv. 4, 6).
 2. There is a chiasmic pattern which time limits us from exploring extensively. But, it is as follows: Lament (1–3), Admonition (4–6), Accusation (7) Hymn (8) Yahweh his name! (8), Hymn (9), Accusation (10–13), Admonition (14–15), Lament (16–17)
 3. It is a lamentation, a dirge, concerning the destruction and loss of life of those of Israel because of its sin (5:1-3).
 - a. Israel, the *once* virgin, or cleansed and separated people to God, has fallen, died, in her sin when she should have had her whole life of love and fruitfulness before her. God did not call her out of Egypt to destroy her!
 - b. This was what God had warned of when entering the Land (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.”).
 4. Yet, though the nation was to die, God *admonishes* individuals to repentance and life (5:4-7).
 - a. God makes it clear that to seek His salvation is the exact opposite of going to Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba, cities of idolatry and false worship. For these cities and their shrines and people would be destroyed in God’s fiery wrath.
 - b. Salvation could only be found in seeking God in repentance and obedience, seeing they had turned **justice** (righting wrongs, etc.) **to wormwood** (bitterness/nausea) and **cast righteousness** (doing right) **to the earth**, either burying or trampling it under foot (5:7).
- B. The 2nd Doxology (5:8-9 – “He who made the Pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, who also darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them

out on the surface of the earth, the Lord is His name.⁹ It is He who flashes forth with destruction upon the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress.”).

1. The basic purpose seems to be to remind Israel afresh, in the language of its own worship, how formidable is the sovereign Creator with whom they must reckon.
2. Here again Amos praises God’s greatness:
 - a. As the sovereign Creator of the constellations which represent the seasons of planting and harvest and is, therefore, the controller of the seasons and weather.
 - b. For, the Lord is His name!
 - i. LORD – Jehovah, the self-Existent, eternal One; the Jewish national name for God.
 - ii. It is a derivative of the name God revealed to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14).
 - iii. It states the most basic fact of the universe, the foundation upon which everything, including the workings of nature itself, is built—that God IS!
3. Thus, the judgment He brings will not be stopped by the strong in their arrogance or by any fortress they may build (5:9)!
4. Application: Whether *Yahweh/Jehovah* IS the God of your light of morning or your darkness of condemnation is determined by your heart and actions right now (5:14-15 – “Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and thus may the Lord God of hosts be with you, just as you have said!¹⁵ Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate! Perhaps the Lord God of hosts may be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”).

III. Amos 9:5-6

A. Context:

1. It does not begin as did the others, with a call to hear the word of God, but speaks of how Amos saw *the Lord, Adonai, the Master*, standing beside/on the altar bringing judgment (9:1)
 - a. Gone is the time for object lessons, pleas, repentance, and dialogue.
 - b. God commands that its capitals be **smitten** so its threshold (foundation) will be shaken and then be **broken** over the heads of Israel!
 - i. This would be like what Samson did, bringing the building down on the Philistines.
 - ii. For, the purpose of the temple, to bring God’s presence to Israel, had been rejected.
 - c. The sword awaited those who escaped. For there would be no escape.
 2. Judgement will be complete with no one escaping (9:2-4).
 - a. This is emphasized by the pattern of “Though they do or go...From there will My hand take them.”
 - b. No matter where or to what extent one might go to flee from God’s wrath, God will bring judgement upon them, seeing God has set his eyes on them for evil and not good!
 - c. What a horrible position to find oneself—that God has set his eyes against you for evil and not good!
- B. The 3rd doxology (9:5-6 – “The Lord God of hosts, the One who touches the land so that it melts, and all those who dwell in it mourn, and all of it rises up like the Nile and subsides like the Nile of Egypt;⁶ The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens and has founded His vaulted dome over the earth, He who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth, the **Lord is His name.**”)
1. Here Yahweh’s cosmic power stresses that His threats of judgment are inescapable!
 - a. The God of heaven can so touch the earth that it melts, bringing mourning when His judgment rises and covers all things like the Nile.
 - b. That He builds his upper chambers in the heavens and sets His dome over the earth is difficult, but what counts is that God’s presence is everywhere from top to bottom, and that presence is utterly dependable and must always be reckoned with, which Israel had not.
 - c. And because He is God he can cause the waters of the sea to be poured upon the earth in a devastating flood of judgment upon the wicked, just like in Noah’s day.
 2. Again, Amos reminds us that the one who does this “The LORD is His name.” The one who threatens is Yahweh/Jehovah, the self-Existent, eternal God who IS.

- a. It is easy to laugh at or ignore impotent threats.
- b. But we must remember that “The LORD is His name!” who promises this, and He offers no empty threats.

CONCLUSION:

1. I am reminded of the words of God’s pleading in Ezekiel that are appropriate here (Ezek. 18:30-32 – “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,” declares the Lord God. “Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. ³¹ Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord God. “Therefore, repent and live.”).
2. God wants you to be saved, just as He did Israel, promising that after the destruction of the wicked 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, would come in Jesus (Amos 9:11-15).
3. So again, I ask, who will Jehovah be for you? Will He be your prosecutor and judge...or your defense and Savior? That all depends on whether you will come to Him in F-R-C-B-LF!