

# Amos 5:8-9

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-5/amos-58-9/>

*Having called individuals in Israel to seek God so that they may live, Amos portrays the LORD as the sovereign God who controls everything in the world.*

In this section, Amos interrupts his denunciation of injustice that he began in verse 7 to talk about the LORD. In doing so, he establishes a contrast between corrupt Israel and their perfect and powerful God, Yahweh (Deuteronomy 32:4–6). Here Amos portrays God as the one who has absolute control over the entire universe. He told the people of Israel that the LORD was the one *who made the Pleiades and Orion*.

The term *Orion* is a translation of “Kesil” which can mean any constellation, but some translators believe it often refers to Orion. Orion is one of the most prominent of the constellations. It is the modern name for a constellation consisting of about eighty stars. The same word “Kesil” is found in Job (Job 9:9; 38:31). This constellation is widely said to resemble a giant hunter, who, according to myth, was bound and placed in the heavens. The rising of *Orion* after sunset was/is a sign that winter was approaching.

The term *Pleiades* translates the Hebrew word “Kimah” which means a cluster of stars, or the “seven stars” which is believed by some translators to refer to Pleiades. Pleiades is located in the shoulder of the constellation Taurus (Job 9:9; 38:31). The rising of *Pleiades* before sunrise indicates the return of spring. It is commonly called the “seven sisters”.

Since the *Pleiades* and *Orion* were seasonal markers in the ancient world, Amos used them to tell Israel that the LORD is the one who controls the times and seasons of the year.

In addition to the seasons, God also regulates the day-night cycle. Amos made it clear when he told his audience that *the LORD also changes deep darkness into morning*. The word *darkness* literally refers to absence of light. In Jewish thought, a day was counted between sundowns. Amos here asserts that it is the LORD who causes the days to occur, as He *changes deep darkness into morning* to begin each new day. The New Testament says something similar, stating that Jesus is the agent that holds all things together (Colossians 1:17). The LORD is the one that has the power to change *darkness* into *morning*. It is He who faithfully does so each day, as He promised after the flood of Noah, so long as the earth remained (Genesis 8:21-22).

Similarly, *the LORD darkens day into night* at the end of each day. The regularity of the solar system continues because of God’s steady, sustaining hand. It is this God who the Israelites were ignoring. It is this God whom Amos exhorts them to “seek” that they might live.

God is so powerful that He even controls the waters. He is the one *who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth*. *The LORD is His name*. In short, the LORD is the all-powerful God who established a covenant relationship with the Israelites. He is eternal

and unchangeable. He alone has full control over the laws of nature and can dictate how nature should operate.

Just as the LORD controls the laws of nature, He also determines the destiny of all the people groups and nations of the earth. As Amos clearly points out, *it is God who flashes forth with destruction upon the strong, so that destruction comes upon the fortress*. If something *flashes forth*, it occurs suddenly. The term *fortress* denotes a refuge for people. A *fortress* was often built on high mountains and was meant to repel invaders. However, the prophet told Israel that the LORD has the power to strike *the strong* with *destruction* with great suddenness, and put an end to their *fortress*. Neither the strong man nor his strong fortress can withstand the LORD's destruction. Likely Amos is making sure the people understand that trusting in their own might is useless. They have a slim chance still remaining by trusting in God. But trusting in their own strength, their own fortresses is completely futile.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>8</sup> 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.**

**<sup>9</sup> It is He who flashes forth *with* destruction upon the strong,  
So that destruction comes upon the fortress.**