

## Christos in Amos

### Commentary for February 1, 2013 — The New Testament Is Silent

“The Book of Amos” is the subject of this month’s article. Read first the [“February 2013 Newsletter.”](#) In this Commentary I want to point out a very interesting textual anomaly in Amos 4:13. Amos is speaking and not quoting God. Here is the King James Version of this passage. Note the 5 things that Amos says YHWH does:

**“For, lo, he that**

- [1] **forms the mountains, and**
- [2] **creates the wind, and**
- [3] **declares unto man** [*adam*, in Hebrew] **what is his thought,**
- [4] **that makes the morning darkness, and**
- [5] **treads upon the high places of the earth,**

**YHWH, The God of hosts, is his name.”**

• *Amos 4:13, KJV*

The third item **“declares unto man what is his thought”** is a good translation from the Hebrew. The word “man” in Hebrew is *adam* and it refers to all descended from Adam, in other words every human being.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Jewish scholars in Egypt translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. It is called the Septuagint, also known as the LXX.<sup>2</sup> In Amos 4:13 the Greek has a different meaning than the Hebrew text. It seems to make reference to Messiah or Christ:

**“For, behold, I am he that strengthens the thunder, and creates the wind, and [3, as above] proclaims to men his Christ, forming the morning and the darkness, and mounting on the high places of the earth, The Lord God Almighty is his name.”**

• *Amos 4:13, Brenton English translation of the Greek LXX*

The meaning of the words even in the Greek might be apparent to English readers:

**“διότι ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ στερεῶν βροντὴν καὶ κτίζων πνεῦμα καὶ ἀπαγγέλλων [proclaims] εἰς ἀνθρώπους [to humanity, to *anthropous*] τὸν χριστὸν [“of the Christ,” or “his Christ”] αὐτοῦ ποιῶν ὄρθρον καὶ ...”**

• *Amos 4:13, LXX*

<sup>1</sup> God communicates to man, but only a few minds in this present age have been opened to understand and respond to His communications. The [February 2013 Newsletter](#) explains how God communicates His thoughts to us.

<sup>2</sup> The LXX Greek translation was produced long before the Masoretic text was finalized into the present Hebrew text (the basis of the Textus Receptus), some time in the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Therefore, a hypothetical Hebrew source text of the LXX may be more than 1,000 years older than the Masoretic text. The Concordant Literal Version translation accepts the LXX rendering:

**“For behold the One forming the mountains, And creating the wind, And telling to humanity of His Anointed One [*christos*, in Greek], Making the dawn and murkiness, And treading on the high-places of the land — YHWH Elohim of hosts is His Name!”**

The Greek words **“of the Christ”** or **“his Christ”** are different (in English) from the meaning of the Hebrew words **“what is his thought.”** Were the Jewish scholars in Egypt translating from a Hebrew text different than we have today, a text that gave them a different Greek translation? This is one explanation, that the Greek was translated from an unknown Hebrew text and not from the Masoretic Text (the authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible today).

But there is another possible solution. The Hebrew letters that form the word translated in English as **“what is his thought”** have some similarity to what would result in the Greek translation. It is close enough to be interesting. In the table below, note the similarity of Hebrew letters that may be the basis of the Greek translation, from a different Hebrew text than the Masoretic Text.

Hebrew of Amos 4:13 from the Masoretic Text:	מה-שתו	<b>“what is his thought”</b>
Hypothetical Hebrew text resulting in the Greek LXX:	משיח	<b>“His Christos”</b>

### ***A Solution to the Problem***

There is a solution to this seeming difficulty. We can accept the Masoretic text as authoritative and not the Greek Septuagint translation of a hypothetical Hebrew text. This must be the case even though the LXX is far older than any Hebrew text today, and the translation mentioning ***Xristos*** is certainly appealing to Christians. We can be confident in the translation from the Masoretic Text because the New Testament nowhere quotes, cites, or even alludes to the Greek rendering of Amos 4:13.

To put the matter another way, Jesus makes no reference to the text of Amos 4:13 at all. Neither do the Gospel writers or the apostles in reference to a Messiah, the anointed, or the Christ (the ***Xristos***). After His resurrection Jesus told the two men on the road to Emmaus:

**“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets [this included the Book of Amos], he expounded unto them IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES the things concerning himself.”**

• **Luke 24:27**

Still later Jesus met with His disciples:

**“And he said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.’ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”**

• **Luke 24:44–45**

In spite of what Jesus told them all, there is no reference to Amos 4:13 in the New Testament, although it would be an excellent messianic proof text. In spite of the Septuagint rendering, Amos 4:13 (either in Greek or in an English translation) is not one of the Scriptures mentioning a Messiah. It does not refer to Jesus at all.

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