

# Ezekiel 38:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land.

## Analysis

---

This prophetic word demonstrates God's sovereign control over history and nations. Even pagan empires and hostile coalitions serve God's purposes while remaining morally accountable for their actions. This Reformed understanding of providence affirms that nothing occurs outside God's decree, yet human agents bear full responsibility for their choices. The prophecy serves pastoral purposes: assuring God's people of His protection, warning enemies of certain judgment, and demonstrating that history moves toward God's appointed end. These prophecies find layered fulfillment—immediate historical, ongoing spiritual, and ultimate eschatological.

## Historical Context

---

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend

beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

## Related Passages

---

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

---

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

## Interlinear Text

---

עַל	יָדְךָ	לְהִשָּׁב יָב	בְּ ז	וְלָבֹז	שָׁלָ ל	לְשָׁל ל
H5921	H3027	H7725	H957	H962	H7998	H7997
	thine hand	to turn	a prey	and to take	a spoil	To take
עַם	וְאֶל	יֹשְׁבֵי י	חֲרָב וְת			
H5971	H413	H3427	H2723			
and upon the people		that are now inhabited	upon the desolate places			
וְקִנְיָן ו	מִקְנֵה ה	עֲשָׂה	מִגּוֹלֵם	מֵאֶסָף		
H7075	H4735	H6213	H1471	H622		
and goods	cattle	which have gotten	out of the nations	that are gathered		
הָאָרֶץ:	טֵב וּר	עַל	יֹשְׁבֵי י			
H776	H2872	H5921	H3427			
of the land	in the midst	that are now inhabited				

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Isaiah 10:6** (Parallel theme): I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

**Ezekiel 29:19** (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

**Ezekiel 38:8** (Parallel theme): After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.