

Ezekiel 38:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

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

וְעַזְבֵּשׁ יְהִי פָּנִים לְגִיאִים הַיּוֹם וְעַזְבֵּשׁ
shall shake at my presence So that the fishes of the sea and the fowls

H7493

H6440

H1709

H3220

H5775

בָּרְמִים שָׁבְרִים מִשְׁבְּרִים יְמִים שָׁבְרִים
of the heaven and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep

H8064

H2416

H7704

H7431

H7430

עַל פָּנִים עַל אָשָׁר עַל אָדָם הַאֲדָم הַעַל
of the earth and all the men at my presence

H5921

of the earth

H3605

and all the men

H834

H5921

at my presence

H127

H120

בָּמְדִיר גַּת תְּפַולָּה בָּקָר יְמִים וְגַּרְגָּשׁ וְעַדְמָה
of the earth shall be thrown down and the mountains shall fall and the steep places

H127

H2040

H2022

H5307

H4095

תְּפַולָּה: לֹא רַץ חֹמֶם הַכָּל
and every wall to the ground shall fall

H3605

and every wall

H2346

to the ground

shall fall

H776

H5307

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:3 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.