

Ezekiel 38:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:

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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

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

וְהוֹצֵאתִי	בִלְחֵי יָדְךָ	חֹסֵי יָדְךָ	וְנָתַתְּ יָדְךָ	וְשׁ וּבָבֶתְךָ יָדְךָ
and I will bring thee forth	into thy jaws	hooks	and put	And I will turn thee back
H3318	H3895	H2397	H5414	H7725
וּפָרָשֵׁי יָמִים	סוֹסֵי יָמִים	חֵילָךְ גָּ	כָּל יָמֶיךָ	אֶתְּךָ
and horsemen	horses	and all thine army		
H6571	H5483	H2428	H3605	H853
רַב	קָהָל	כָּל מִן	מְכֻלּוֹל	לְבָשֵׁי יָמֶיךָ
of armour even a great	company		with all sorts	all of them clothed
H7227	H6951	H3605	H4358	H3847
כָּלָם:	חֶרֶב וְ	תַּפְשֵׁי יָמֶיךָ	וּמִגְן	צִנֵּה
	swords	all of them handling	and shields	with bucklers
H3605	H2719	H8610	H4043	H6793

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 29:4 (Parallel theme): But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

Daniel 11:40 (Parallel theme): And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

Ezekiel 38:15 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

2 Kings 19:28 (Parallel theme): Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

Ezekiel 39:2 (Parallel theme): And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: