

Ezekiel 39:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.

Analysis

Seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. The Hebrew shivah chadashim (שִׁבְעָה חֲדָשִׁים, "seven months") signifies completeness—seven being the biblical number of divine perfection. This extended burial period indicates the staggering scale of Gog's slaughtered multitude, requiring sustained national effort to restore covenant purity.

The purpose clause **that they may cleanse the land** uses the verb *taher* (טהר), meaning ritual purification. According to Numbers 19:11-16, contact with corpses brought ceremonial defilement lasting seven days. The massive death toll from Gog's armies would render the entire land ritually unclean, requiring systematic cleansing. This demonstrates that God's victory accomplishes not merely military triumph but covenantal restoration, making the land fit again for His holy presence among His people.

Historical Context

The seven-month timeframe reflects both practical necessity (decomposition in Middle Eastern heat) and theological symbolism (complete purification). In Israelite law, unburied bodies defiled the land (Numbers 35:33-34), and proper burial was a sacred duty even for enemies (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

This prophecy addresses exilic Israel's deepest fear: permanent defilement preventing restoration to covenant relationship. By describing meticulous

cleansing, Ezekiel assures the exiles that God will not only defeat their enemies but fully restore their land's holiness. Archaeological evidence from ancient Israel shows careful attention to burial practices, confirming the cultural importance of this imagery.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why does God require such thorough cleansing rather than simply removing the bodies supernaturally?
2. How does this seven-month purification process reflect the ongoing work of sanctification in believers' lives?

Interlinear Text

לִמְעֵן	ישְׁרָאֵל	בַּיּוֹתֶר	וְקִבְרָוּם	רְטָה	תְּמִימָנָה
be burying	shall the house	of Israel	H4616	of them that	they may cleanse
H6912	H1004	H3478		H2891	
אֶת	שְׁבַע	הַ	בְּאַרְצֵי	חֲדַשִּׁים:	
H853	the land	H7651	And seven	H2320	months
H776					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 21:23 (Parallel theme): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is

accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Ezekiel 39:14 (Parallel theme): And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.

Ezekiel 39:16 (Parallel theme): And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.

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