

Ezekiel 39:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog.

Analysis

When any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it—The Hebrew *tsiyun* (תַּיּוּן, "sign" or "marker") refers to a monument or waymark, ensuring discovered remains are not left to cause further defilement. This protocol prevents contamination of searchers while ensuring professional burial crews can locate and properly inter the remains.

The attention to **a man's bone** (*etzem adam*, אֶצֶם אָדָם) shows God's concern for thoroughness—even skeletal fragments require proper burial. Numbers 19:16 specifies that touching a bone defiles; thus, the marker system allows laypeople to identify remains without incurring uncleanness while consecrated burial teams handle actual interment in **the valley of Hamon-gog**. This division of labor demonstrates practical wisdom in maintaining corporate purity while accomplishing necessary cleansing.

Historical Context

Archaeological discoveries from ancient Israel show various types of burial markers and ossuaries, confirming the cultural practice of marking grave sites. The systematic approach described here—civilian markers plus professional burial teams—reflects sophisticated understanding of ritual purity logistics.

For the exilic community, this detailed protocol answered practical questions about

restoration: How could the land be purified after such massive slaughter? Ezekiel's answer shows God provides both the victory and the practical means of consequent purification. The valley of Hamon-gog becomes a permanent memorial, similar to how Achan's cairn (Joshua 7:26) or Absalom's pillar (2 Samuel 18:18) memorialized significant events. This transforms battlefield carnage into testimony of divine judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the marker system teach about balancing corporate purity with individual participation in God's work?
2. How does God's attention to even scattered bones demonstrate His thoroughness in dealing with sin and defilement?

Interlinear Text

בָּעָרִים	בָּעָרִים	בָּאָרֶץ	וְכֹאָה	עַצְם
And the passengers	And the passengers	the land	when any seeth	bone
H5674	H5674	H776	H7200	H6106
אָדָם	וְבָנָה	אַצְלָה	עַד	אָתָה
a man's	then shall he set up	by	a sign	have buried
H120	H1129	H681	H5704	H853
בְּמִקְבֵּר	יְמִינָה	בְּמִקְבֵּר	בְּמִינָה	אַתָּה
have buried	H413	it in the valley	H0	of Hamongog
H6912	H1516			H1996