

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* (צִיּוֹן, "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, עֲצֵם 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

הַעֲבָרִים	הַעֲבָרִים	בְּאֶרֶץ	וְכִזְּה	עַצְמוֹ	
And the passengers	And the passengers	the land	when any seeth	bone	
H5674	H5674	H776	H7200	H6106	
אִם	וְכִנָּה	אֶצֶל	צִיּוֹן	הַמִּקְבָּרִים	אֹתוֹ
a man's	then shall he set up	by	a sign	have buried	
H120	H1129	H681	H6725	H5704	H853
הַמִּקְבָּרִים	אֶל	גִּי יַא	הַמִּן	גֹּג:	
have buried		it in the valley		of Hamongog	
H6912	H413	H1516	H0	H1996	