

Ezekiel 39:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.

Analysis

Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves—This macabre invitation summons carrion birds and scavengers to God's eschatological banquet. The Hebrew *qavu* (קָבֹעַ, "assemble") is typically used for gathering God's people for worship or judgment (Isaiah 43:9, Joel 3:11), ironically applied here to vultures and beasts consuming the wicked.

My sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you uses *zivchi* (זִבְחֵי), the term for covenant sacrifices. This inverts sacrificial imagery: rather than Israel offering sacrifices to God, God offers the slain armies as sacrifice to scavengers. The phrase **a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel** (*zevach gadol al-harei Yisrael*, זֶבֶחׁ גָּדוֹל עַל־הַרִּיּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל) echoes Zephaniah 1:7-8 and Revelation 19:17-18, depicting judgment as sacrificial feast where God's enemies become the offering.

Historical Context

This imagery inverts ancient Near Eastern victory celebrations where conquerors feasted after battle. Here, birds and beasts feast while Gog's armies become the meal. The motif appears in Jeremiah 7:33 and 34:20 as covenant curse for

disobedience—bodies becoming food for birds signified utter defeat and divine rejection.

Ezekiel prophesied this during Babylonian exile when Israel seemed powerless. The vision of God preparing a sacrificial feast from their enemies' corpses reversed their humiliation. This eschatological imagery influenced Revelation 19:17-21, where an angel summons birds to "the supper of the great God" to consume the beast's armies. For Reformed theology, this prefigures final judgment where Christ defeats all opposition to His kingdom.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the inversion of sacrificial imagery (enemies becoming the sacrifice) demonstrate the totality of God's judgment?
2. What does this "anti-feast" reveal about the destiny of those who persistently oppose God's covenant purposes?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	יְהוָה	אֵדָן	יְהוָה	אָמַר	בְּהָאָדָם	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	אָמַר	וְאַתָּה	בְּנֵי
H559	H3069	H3541	H136	H559	H120	H3605	H2416	H559	H859	H1121
Speak	GOD	the Lord	the Lord	Speak	of man	unto every feathered	and to every beast	Speak	And thou son	of man
פְּשָׁدֵךְ	הַשְׁמִיד	תִּתְחַזֵּק	לְכָל	לְכָל	כָּל	כָּל	כָּל	כָּל	וְרָא	לְצַפֵּן
H7704	H2077	H5921	H2077	H5921	H3671	H3605	H6833	H6908	H935	H834
of the field	the day	gather	gather	gather	gather	gather	gather	gather	gather	gather
עַל	עַל	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	מִתְבָּבָב	בְּכָל	בְּכָל
H2077	H2077	H5439	H622	H935	H6908	H3605	H6833	H6908	H935	H834
sacrifice	sacrifice	on every side	gather	yourselfs and come	Assemble	unto every feathered	gather	gather	gather	gather
עַל	עַל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל	לְכָל
H1419	H5921	H2077	H2077	H2077	H2076	H589	H834	H834	H935	H834
for you even a great	the day	sacrifice	sacrifice	sacrifice	that I do sacrifice	that I do sacrifice	that I do sacrifice	that I do sacrifice	that I do sacrifice	that I do sacrifice
דָם	דָם	בְּשֶׁר	בְּשֶׁר	בְּשֶׁר	בְּשֶׁר	וְשַׁתְּ יְתַמְּמֵם	וְשַׁתְּ יְתַמְּמֵם	וְשַׁתְּ יְתַמְּמֵם	וְשַׁתְּ יְתַמְּמֵם	וְשַׁתְּ יְתַמְּמֵם
H1818	H2022	H1320	H1320	H1320	H3478	H398	H2076	H589	H834	H834
blood	upon the mountains	and drink	and drink	and drink	of Israel	that ye may eat	that ye may eat	that ye may eat	that ye may eat	that ye may eat

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 1:7 (Sacrifice): Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

Isaiah 34:6 (Blood): The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

Jeremiah 12:9 (Parallel theme): Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

Ezekiel 39:4 (References Israel): Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.

Isaiah 56:9 (Parallel theme): All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

Isaiah 18:6 (Parallel theme): They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Jeremiah 46:10 (Blood): For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org