

Ezekiel 39:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

Analysis

Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—The Hebrew gibborim (גִּבּוֹרִים), "mighty men") typically designates elite warriors, while nesiey ha-aretz (נְשִׂיאֵי הָאָרֶץ) "princes of the earth") indicates rulers and nobility. This comprehensive list—from military elite to political leadership—shows no human power escapes divine judgment.

The livestock metaphors—**rams, lambs, goats, bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan**—compare Gog's warriors to prime sacrificial animals. Bashan (בָּשָׁן), the fertile region east of Galilee, was renowned for superior livestock (Deuteronomy 32:14, Amos 4:1). By comparing warriors to Bashan's choicest animals, Ezekiel emphasizes that earth's mightiest leaders are merely fattened livestock before God's sovereignty. This brutally deflates human pretension to autonomous power.

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern culture, Bashan's pastures produced the finest cattle, making "fatlings of Bashan" proverbial for excellence and abundance. Psalm 22:12 uses "strong bulls of Bashan" to symbolize powerful enemies surrounding the Messiah. Amos 4:1 sarcastically calls Samaria's oppressive elite "cows of Bashan."

For exilic Israel, this prophecy reversed their experience: instead of being devoured by superior enemies, their oppressors would become carrion. The

sacrificial imagery (rams, lambs, goats, bullocks) indicates these deaths fulfill divine purpose—not random violence but orchestrated judgment. This influenced later apocalyptic literature, particularly Revelation's depiction of final judgment where human pretensions to power are definitively exposed and destroyed.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does comparing mighty warriors to livestock expose the futility of human power apart from submission to God?
2. What modern "fatlings of Bashan" (symbols of strength and self-sufficiency) does this passage challenge us to see through God's perspective?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׂר רְגִבּוֹרִים לֹא תֹאכֵל יְدֵם נְשִׂיאִים אֲרֹץ הָאָרֶץ
the flesh of the mighty Ye shall eat the blood of the princes of the earth
H1320 H1368 H398 H1818 H5387 H776

תְּשַׁתַּח וְאֵל יְמִינְךָ יְמִינֵי עֲתָדִים כָּל יְמֵינֶךָ מְרִיאִים
and drink of rams of lambs and of goats of bullocks all of them fatlings
H8354 H352 H3733 H6260 H6499 H4806

בָּשָׂר בְּלָמָן
of Bashan H3605
H1316

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 22:12 (Parallel theme): Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

Jeremiah 51:40 (Parallel theme): I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats.

Amos 4:1 (Parallel theme): Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

Ezekiel 29:5 (Parallel theme): And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

Revelation 19:21 (Parallel theme): And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Jeremiah 50:27 (Parallel theme): Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.
