

Ezekiel 39:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

Analysis

And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed—God's ultimate purpose in the defeat of Gog is theophanic display. The Hebrew kavod (כָּבוֹד, "glory") refers to the visible manifestation of God's presence and power. **My hand that I have laid upon them** uses yad (יָד, "hand") as a metonym for direct divine intervention, not mere secondary causation.

This verse transitions from Gog's destruction (39:1-20) to its theological significance: God's glory will be vindicated before all nations. The phrase **"all the heathen shall see"** emphasizes universal recognition—even pagan nations will acknowledge Yahweh's sovereignty when they witness His miraculous deliverance of Israel. This anticipates Revelation's eschatological vision where every knee bows and every tongue confesses Christ's lordship (Philippians 2:10-11).

The double emphasis on divine action—**"my judgment...my hand"**—excludes any human contribution to this victory. Israel's restoration will be unambiguously God's work, leaving no room for national pride or military boasting. This principle pervades redemptive history: salvation is of the Lord alone (Jonah 2:9), accomplished by divine initiative and power, never by human merit or strength.

Historical Context

Ezekiel prophesied during the Babylonian exile (593-571 BC), when Israel's national identity and covenant relationship with Yahweh seemed shattered. Chapters 38-39 describe an eschatological invasion by Gog of Magog against restored Israel, culminating in God's miraculous intervention. This prophecy served to assure the exiles that their story wasn't over—God would ultimately vindicate His name and restore His people.

The ancient Near Eastern context expected gods to protect their worshipers and territories. Israel's defeat and exile raised questions about Yahweh's power and faithfulness. Ezekiel answers: the exile was God's judgment on covenant unfaithfulness, not divine weakness. The future defeat of Gog would demonstrate conclusively that Yahweh controls all nations and history itself. No force, however mighty, can thwart His redemptive purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's commitment to display His glory through judgment and deliverance challenge our desire for comfortable, private faith?
2. In what ways might you be tempted to take credit for spiritual victories that are solely God's work?

Interlinear Text

וְנָתַתִּי י	אֶת	כְּבוֹדִי י	הַגּוֹיִם	וְיֵרְאוּ	כָּל
And I will set	H853	my glory	among the heathen	shall see	H3605
H5414		H3519	H1471	H7200	
הַגּוֹיִם	אֶת	מִשְׁפָּטִי	אֲשֶׁר	עָשָׂה יְדִי	וְאֶת
among the heathen	H853	my judgment	H834	that I have executed	H853
H1471		H4941		H6213	
וְיָדִי י	אֲשֶׁר	שָׁ מְתִי	בָּהֶם:		
and my hand	H834	that I have laid	H0		
H3027		H7760			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 37:20 (Parallel theme): Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

Exodus 9:16 (Parallel theme): And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Ezekiel 38:16 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Ezekiel 36:23 (Parallel theme): And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

Ezekiel 38:23 (Parallel theme): Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Exodus 7:4 (Judgment): But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

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