Ezekiel 27

The Shipwreck of Tyre: Lament for the Proud Ship

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Tyre was the finest ship on the sea — beautiful, rich, well crewed, and sure of herself. One east wind sent it all to the bottom. A life built on wealth and reputation, with God left off the manifest, is one storm away from the deep.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 27 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Now, thou son of man, Green take up a lamentation for Tyrus;

3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art ◷ situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, ⚠ I am of perfect beauty.

4 Thy borders are ⇄ in the midst of the seas, ⚠ thy builders have perfected thy beauty.

5 They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

6 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

7 ◷ Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee.

8 The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: ◷ thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.

9 The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers : all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise.

10 They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

11 The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; ⚠ they have made thy beauty perfect.

12 Tarshish was ⇄ thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs.

13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were ⇄ thy merchants: ⚠ they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.

14 They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.

15 The men of Dedan were ⇄ thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.

16 Syria was ⇄ thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

17 Judah, and the land of Israel, they were ⇄ thy merchants: they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm.

18 Damascus was ⇄ thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

19 Dan also and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market.

20 Dedan was ⇄ thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

21 Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats: in these were they ⇄ thy merchants.

22 The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were ⇄ thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.

23 Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were ⇄ thy merchants.

24 These were ⇄ thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.

25 The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and ⚠ thou wast replenished, and made very glorious ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

26 Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: ▲ the east wind hath broken thee ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

27 Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers , and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas ◷ in the day of thy ruin.

28 The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots.

29 And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land;

30 And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and ⚠ shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:

31 And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and ◷ gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.

32 And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, ⇄ What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33 When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; ◷ thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise.

34 In the time when thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall.

35 All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee, and ⚠ their kings shall be sore afraid, they shall be troubled in their countenance.

36 The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee; ⚠ thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more .

Marked in the text

- **v2** take up a lamentation for Tyrus
- **v3** ◷ situate at the entry of the sea
- **v3** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD
- **v3** ⚠ I am of perfect beauty
- **v4** ⇄ in the midst of the seas *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ⚠ thy builders have perfected thy beauty
- **v7** ◷ Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt
- **v8** ◷ thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots
- **v11** ⚠ they have made thy beauty perfect
- **v12** ⇄ thy merchant *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** ⚠ they traded the persons of men
- **v17** ⚠ Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants
- **v25** ⚠ thou wast replenished, and made very glorious
- **v26** ▲ the east wind hath broken thee
- **v27** ◷ in the day of thy ruin
- **v30** ⚠ shall cry bitterly

- **v31** gird them with sackcloth
- **v32** What city is like Tyrus
- **v33** thou didst enrich the kings of the earth
- **v35** their kings shall be sore afraid
- **v36** thou shalt be a terror

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:3 (KJV)

3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty.

Setting

This chapter continues the oracle against Tyre that began in 26:1 (the eleventh year, about 587/586 BC). Chapter 26 announced Tyre's fall; chapter 27 is a funeral song for it. Ezekiel pictures the proud sea-city as a magnificent merchant ship, lists the nations that traded with her from Spain to Arabia, and then sinks the ship in a storm. God is named only in the opening verses — "Thus says the Lord GOD" (v3) — and the rest of the chapter is commerce and catastrophe.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **the dirge and the boast:** "take up a lamentation over Tyre" (v2), the city "who dwells at the entrance to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands" (v3). "O Tyre, you have said, 'I am perfect in beauty'" (v3).
- vv4–11 — **the glorious ship:** "Your borders are in the heart of the seas; your builders have perfected your beauty" (v4). Planks of fir from Senir, a mast of Lebanon cedar, oars of Bashan oak, ivory decks, an embroidered Egyptian linen sail (vv5–7). Rowers from Sidon and Arvad, Tyre's own wise men as pilots, caulkers from Gebal (vv8–9). Soldiers from Persia, Lud and Put hung their shields on her walls; "they perfected your beauty" (vv10–11).
- vv12–24 — **the trading world:** Tarshish with silver, iron, tin and lead (v12); Javan, Tubal and Meshech paying "with the lives of men and vessels of bronze" (v13); horses from Beth-togarmah (v14); "Judah and the land of Israel, they were your traders" with wheat, honey, oil and balm (v17); Damascus, Arabia, Kedar, Sheba and many more (vv18–24).
- vv25–27 — **the shipwreck:** "you were filled and were very glorious in the heart of the seas" (v25). "The east wind has broken you in the heart of the seas" (v26). All her wealth, crew and soldiers sink "on the day of your overthrow" (v27).
- vv28–36 — **the world mourns:** the sailors come ashore, "cry bitterly," throw dust on their heads, shave their heads and put on sackcloth (vv29–31). Their lament: "Who is like Tyre" (v32). "You

enriched the kings of earth" (v33) — now the coastlands are appalled (v35), and "you will cease to be forever" (v36).

Repeated words

beauty (vv3, 4, 11); the heart of the seas (vv4, 25, 26, 27); pilots (vv8, 27, 28, 29); coastlands (vv3, 6, 7, 15, 35); lamentation (vv2, 32); merchandise, wares, traders and customers in nearly every verse of vv12–24.

Contrasts

"I am perfect in beauty" (v3) ⟷ "you will cease to be forever" (v36). Built by the best hands of many nations (vv5–11) ⟷ broken by one east wind (v26). "Very glorious in the heart of the seas" (v25) ⟷ sunk "into the heart of the seas" (v27). Enriching the kings of earth (v33) ⟷ kings "horribly afraid" (v35). A full ship's manifest (vv12–24) ⟷ no mention of God in it.

Chapter theme (my words)

Tyre was the finest ship on the sea — beautiful, rich, well crewed, and sure of herself. One east wind sent it all to the bottom. A life built on wealth and reputation, with God left off the manifest, is one storm away from the deep.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:26 (KJV)

26 Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: ▲ the east wind hath broken thee ⇄ in the midst of the seas.

A lament for the living (vv1–3)

A *qinah* was a funeral song, sung for the dead. Ezekiel sings it while Tyre is still at the height of its power — the funeral is certain because God has spoken (26:14). Block, in Guzik, notes that the verb "dwells" (v3) carries the sense of sitting enthroned: Tyre ruled the seas. Her sin is in her own words: "I am perfect in beauty" (v3). Wiersbe, in Guzik, observes that "merchant" and "merchandise" are used twenty-one times in this chapter, "because Tyre was a mercantile city."

The ship of state (vv4–11)

Guzik explains the central picture: Tyre as a magnificent ship, each part standing for some part of its power. The best materials of the known world built her — fir from Senir (Mount Hermon), cedar from Lebanon, oak from Bashan, ivory inlaid from the coastlands of Cyprus, a sail of Egyptian embroidered linen, coverings of blue and purple. The best people crewed her: oarsmen from Sidon and Arvad, master pilots from Tyre itself, caulkers from Gebal (Byblos), and a mercenary army from Persia, Lud (Lydia) and Put (Libya). Trapp, in Guzik, says Tyre is "fitly here compared to a goodly ship, and her desolation to a dismal shipwreck."

The manifest (vv12–24)

The trade list reaches from Tarshish (likely southern Spain) to Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia — much of the world of Genesis 10. Clarke, in Guzik, says the records are as orderly "as they could have been in a European custom-house." Two details stand out. First, human beings were cargo: Javan, Tubal and Meshech paid "with the lives of men" (v13). Clarke, in Guzik: "The bodies and souls of men were bought and sold in those days." Guzik calls this a violation of God's law and of the dignity of people made in His image, and connects it with Amos's earlier rebuke of Tyre for delivering up whole populations (Amos 1:9–10). Second, Judah and Israel were on the list (v17) — God's people were business partners with the city that would gloat over Jerusalem's fall. Guzik notes that God is absent from the whole list; Tyre cared only for business.

The east wind (vv25–27)

The ship is fully loaded — "filled" (v25) — and sails into deep water. Then "the east wind has broken you" (v26). The east wind was the hot, violent wind off the desert, and in the prophets a picture of judgment, often meaning Babylon. God isn't named here, but Guzik points to Ps 48:7 — God breaks the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. Everything goes down together: riches, wares, sailors, pilots, soldiers (v27). Morgan, in Guzik, on Tyre's commercial pride: "There is nothing more calculated to destroy a people."

The world mourns (vv28–36)

The sailors of every other ship come ashore and grieve with every sign of mourning — dust, ashes, shaved heads, sackcloth (vv30–31). Feinberg, in Guzik, notes that shaving the head for the dead was forbidden to Israel (Deut 14:1). Block, in Guzik, likens Tyre's sinking to a "Titanic" of the seas. Taylor, in Guzik, sees the kings' fear as self-interested — they mourn their lost profits. Wiersbe, in Guzik, sees this lament as a preview of the fall of "Babylon the great" in Rev 18, where merchants and sea captains weep over another great trading city in almost the same words. Block, in Guzik: "The Lord of history always has the last word." Feinberg, in Guzik: "riches without God are unable to satisfy the heart of man."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **merchant — *rakal* (H7402):** to go about as a trader; a merchant.
- **coastlands — *ʾiy* (H339):** a coast, island, distant shore.
- **perfect — *kalil* (H3632):** complete, entire, whole.
- **beauty — *yophi* (H3308):** beauty, loveliness.
- **builders — *banah* (H1129):** to build.
- **pilots — *chobel* (H2259):** a sailor, ship's helmsman (from the word for rope).
- **traders — *sachar* (H5503):** to travel about as a merchant, trade.
- **merchandise — *maʿarab* (H4627):** goods for exchange, wares.
- **wealth — *hon* (H1952):** riches, substance.
- **east wind — *qadim* (H6921):** the east; the scorching desert wind.
- **heart — *leb* (H3820):** the heart, the midst.

- **overthrow — *mappeleth* (H4658):** a fall, ruin.
- **cry bitterly — *mar* (H4751):** bitter, bitterly.
- **terrified — *ballahah* (H1091):** terror, sudden destruction.

Cross-references

Gen 10:2–7; Deut 14:1; 1 Kgs 10:22; Ps 48:7; Ps 49:6–12; Prov 11:28; Prov 23:4–5; Isa 23:1–18; Ezek 26:1–21; Ezek 28:1–19; Amos 1:9–10; Jonah 1:3–4; Matt 6:19–21; Mark 8:36; Luke 12:16–21; 1 Tim 6:9–10; Jas 4:13–16; Rev 18:9–19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 27:2 (KJV)

2 Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus;

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation" (v2)

God told Ezekiel to grieve over a proud, pagan city. I'll obey that by refusing to cheer at anyone's shipwreck — and by grieving honestly over the things I've built without God. Some lamentations need to be sung over my own plans before the storm comes.

Sin to confess — "I am perfect in beauty."

Tyre's boast (v3) was pride dressed in success. I'll confess the times I've looked at what I've built — my work, my books, my tools, my reputation — and taken quiet credit that belongs to God. Pride doesn't usually sound loud; it sounds like satisfaction.

Warning to heed — one east wind

Tyre had the best wood, the best crew, the best soldiers, and the richest customers. One wind broke it all (v26). Many of the men I disciple know this firsthand — a life that looked solid until one arrest, one relapse, one phone call sank it. What we build without God can't survive the storm, and a man in recovery has to take God's warning seriously: the old life always sinks.

Promise to trust — the Lord of the wind

The same God who sent the east wind is the One Jesus showed Himself to be on the Sea of Galilee, when He rebuked the wind and the sea and they obeyed (Mark 4:39–41). Meyer, in Guzik: "O mariner! See to it that Christ is on board." For the man whose life has already gone under, Christ is still the Lord of the storm, and He doesn't abandon those who call to Him.

Example to follow — honest trade

Tyre bought and sold "the lives of men" (v13). I want everything I sell and every deal I make to honor people made in God's image. And I want to lay up treasure in heaven rather than on earth (Matt 6:19–21).

Worship

The LORD rules the seas and the winds. The richest cities of the world are in His hand, and He brings down the proud. He alone is perfect in beauty, and He has the last word over history.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You see what I'm building and what I'm trusting. Break my pride before it breaks me. Keep me from treating people as cargo or success as security. Be on board in my life and in the lives of the men I serve — and when the east wind blows, hold us fast in Christ. Amen.