

**The Inscrutable Question: The Traffic of Tyre's Merchants and Traders, Ezk 27:12-25; East Wind Wrecks the HMS Tyre, Ezk 27:26**

- 22) The army was made up of mercenaries from Persia, Lud, and Put along with the "sons of Arvad." When these men were on leave they would come into Tyre and decorate its walls with their shields, said in verse 11 to have perfected the city's beauty.
- 23) In verses 12-25 we have a detailed presentation of the widespread network of nations, cities, and peoples involved in its economy.
- 24) Each verse mentions one or more of these who were customers of Tyre along with the products that were traded between them.

**Ezekiel 27:12 - Tarshish [ Spain ] was your customer because of the abundance of all kinds of wealth; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they paid for your wares.**

- 25) The world is as fallen as is its inhabitants. The one who rules this world is Satan. He desperately seeks to distract potential witness from learning, pursuing, and executing the will of God. In order to do so, he provides the lust pattern with the world's endless supplies of merchandise.
- 26) Tyre and its king are symbolic of Satan and cosmos diabolicus. She provides her citizens with the opulence of worldly gain. She capitalizes on the greed of not only her own but that of the peoples of other nations.
- 27) Their commerce is material lust, energized by greed, and a booming economy that makes everything available at an affordable price.
- 28) Beginning with products from Tarshish in verse 12 and ending with the ships of Tarshish in verse 25, we see a humming free-enterprise system at the peak of its efficiency
- 29) But unfortunately this booming economy lacks the spiritual life necessary to maintain the required restraints of personal integrity, cultural morality, or business ethics required to remain free of divine discipline.
- 30) Nevertheless, the extent of her trade is breathtaking as is demonstrated in the next paragraph.

**V. The Traffic of Tyre's Merchants and Traders**

- 1) The next 14 verses give us a picture of the commercialism that existed in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean during the time of Tyre's preeminence.
- 2) Here we see the tremendous wealth that the traffic among Tyre's merchants and traders were able to produce on a multinational level.
- 3) In effect, Tyre was an emporium, distributing goods throughout the ancient world. "Emporium" is an economic term that refers to a "place of trade; a commercial center carrying a diversity of merchandise" [*Webster's New Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*].
- 4) Here now is Ezekiel's "Business Report" on the commercial activities of this island emporium:

**Ezekiel 27:12 - "Tarshish [ Spain ] was your customer because of the abundance of all kinds of wealth; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they paid for your wares.**

**v 13 - "Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were your traders [ areas around the Black and Caspian Seas to the north ]; with the lives of men [ slaves ] and vessels of bronze [ copper ] they paid for your merchandise.**

**v 14 - "Those from the house of Togarma [ Armenia ] gave horses, war horses, and mules for your wares.**

**Ezekiel 27:15** - "The sons of Dedan were your traders [ **a sales force of people in southern Arabia around the Persian Gulf** ]. Many coastlands were your market; ivory tusks and ebony they brought as your payment.

**v 16** - "Aram / A-ram / [ **probably Babylonia** ] was your customer because of the abundance of your goods; they paid for your wares with emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and rubies.

**v 17** - "Judah and the land of Israel, they were your traders; with the wheat of Minnith, cakes [ **a confection made with honey** ], honey, olive oil, and balm [ **a medication** ] they paid for your merchandise.

**v 18** - "Damascus was your customer because of the abundance of your goods, because of the abundance of all kinds of wealth, because of the wine of Helbon / HEL-bon / [ **a viticultural district 13 miles north of Damascus that produced the most costly wines of that time; according to Strabo, its vintages were the favorites of Nebuchadnezzar and among Persian kings** ] and white wool [ **from the large flocks that were tended to the east** ].

**v 19** - "Vedan / VEE-dan / and Javan / JAY-van / paid for your wares from Uzal / U-zal / [ **Yemen** ]; wrought iron [ **from which sword blades were made** ], cassia / KASH-i-a / [ **a type of cinnamon** ], and sweet cane were among your merchandise.

**v 20** - "Dedan / DEE-dan / [ **an insular city like Tyre in the Persian Gulf** ] traded with you in saddlecloths for riding.

**v 21** - "Arabia and all the princes of Kedar / KEY-der / [ **Bedouin tribes** ], they were your customers for lambs, rams, and goats; for these they were your customers.

**v 22** - "The traders of Sheba [ **southern Arabia** ] and Raamah / RAY-a-mah / [ **probably on the Persian Gulf** ], they traded with you; they paid for your wares with the best of all kinds of spices, and with all kinds of precious stones, and gold.

**Ezekiel 27:23** - "Haran / HA-ran / [ **a city on the caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egypt in the west** ], Canneh / KANE-e /, Eden, the traders of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad / KIL-mad / [ **all cities in Mesopotamia that were found along the trading routes between the Persian Gulf and Phoenicia** ] traded with you.

**v 24** - "They traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of blue and embroidered work, and in carpets of many colors, and tightly wound cords, among your merchandise.

**v 25** - "The ships of Tarshish were the carriers for your merchandise."

- 5) Tarshish, a Phoenician colony, was home to a large fleet of ships that formed a merchant marine fleet. They were utilized to transport much of the traffic in goods and wares that Ezekiel mentions in this passage.
- 6) Thus Tarshish introduces and concludes this section. It is at this point that Ezekiel begins the next strophe of his lamentation.

## **VI. Lamentation Resumes as the Doom of Tyre Looms, Ezekiel 27:26-36**

- 1) As we return to allegory, in verse 26 Tyre is again presented as a magnificently constructed ship, made of the best and most expensive materials from all over its empire.

**Ezekiel 27:26** - "Your rowers have brought you into great waters; The east wind has broken you in the heart of the seas.

- 2) Remember that the rowers were, according to verse 8, the famous mariners, seamen, and sailors of Phoenicia. They were the very best men available at that time to man an ocean-going vessel.
- 3) These rowers have steered the ship directly into the path of an approaching east wind. But those who row do not set the course. The pilots do that.
- 4) Verse 8 also tells us that the “wise men of Tyre” were the pilots. Great arrogance has led this commercial center to become vulnerable to a predator nation, symbolized in verse 26 by the east wind.
- 5) That east wind will be Nebuchadnezzar and his Chaldean army, which began their 13-year siege of Tyre in 586 B.C.
- 6) In order to appreciate this allegory, we take a quick look at the east wind:
  1. The direction from which an air current comes determines its name, as east wind coming from the east but blowing toward the west.
  2. In Phoenicia, an east wind is called a sirocco. It is a scorching wind from the desert; hot, gusty, and filled with sand and dust.
  3. The temperature often rises 15 or 20 degrees within a few hours and its strength makes it dangerous for ships at sea.

**Psalm 48:7 - With the east wind the Lord does break the ships of Tarshish.**

4. Jonah and a crew of Phoenician sailors had a famous run-in with one of these siroccos in:

**Jonah 1:3 - But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fair, and went down into it ...**

**v 4 - And the Lord hurled a great east wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.**

5. Joppa was a Phoenician port and Tarshish was a Phoenician colony. There is no doubt that a Phoenician crew manned the ship on which Jonah bought passage.
6. These are the best sailors in the business yet this sirocco caused these old salts to become afraid.

**Jonah 1:5 - Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god [ the false gods of the Baal cult in Phoenicia ] ...**

7. The Scripture often uses such winds in figurative ways to illustrate certain principles. The power of God is depicted by the writer of:

**Psalm 107:25 - For He spoke and raised up a stormy east wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.**

8. Divine discipline awaits any individual or nation that practices idolatry. Such was the case with Phoenicia and the citizens of Tyre. They are among those who could have benefited from Hosea’s warning a little over a hundred years before Tyre’s fall:

**Hosea 8:7a - They sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind.**

9. Paul warns the believer that spiritual maturity will protect him from the deceit that is carried by the winds of false doctrine in:

**Ephesians 4:14** - We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.