

EZEKIEL

Chapter 28

Prophecy Against the Prince of Tyre

The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your heart is proud, and you have said, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,’ yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god—3 you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you; 4 by your wisdom and your understanding you have made wealth for yourself, and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; 5 by your great wisdom in your trade you have increased your wealth, and your heart has become proud in your wealth—6 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you make your heart like the heart of a god, 7 therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. 8 They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas. 9 Will you still say, ‘I am a god,’ in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you? 10 You shall die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD.”

28:2 *ruler of Tyre.* May refer to the city of Tyre as ruler, or to Ittobaal, the king then ruling Tyre (see v. 12). (CSB)

I am a god. Tyre’s sin is epitomized in the pride of the chief of state, the prince. Ezekiel condemns the prince out of his own mouth, quoting him. (TLSB)

28:3 Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel, “No mystery is too difficult for you” (Dn 4:9; cf Dn 1:20; see note, Ezk 14:14). Ambr: “[Daniel] was willing to endure danger for the law of God rather than to be turned from his purpose in order to gain the favor of men” (NPNF 2 10:52). The king of Tyre lacked the fear of the Lord, without which the most highly endowed intellect is prone to work havoc (cf Pr 3:7; 9:10; 26:12; Is 5:21; Jer 9:23–24). (TLSB)

28:6 *like the heart of a god.* Describes his overconfidence and self-delusion. (TLSB)

28:7 *foreigners.* The Babylonians. (CSB)

most ruthless of the nations. The Babylonians are given this distinction (cf 30:11; 32:12). (TLSB)

28:10 *uncircumcised.* Used here in the sense of barbarian or uncouth. The Phoenicians, like the Israelites and the Egyptians, practiced circumcision (see 31:18; 32:19). (CSB)

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant with God (Gn 17:10–14). In contrast to his claim to royal honor, the king will die a shameful death like the uncircumcised Philistine slain by David and left unburied on the battlefield (1Sm 17:26, 36, 51). (TLSB)

28:1–10 Tyre symbolizes God’s concern to destroy sinful self-pride. Her ruins remain as Tyre’s legacy of disgrace to surrounding nations. Unfortunately, like Tyre, we often deify ourselves. We pridefully boast in the works of our own hands instead of rejoicing in what God has worked through us. Paul states, “Let

the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1Co 1:31), who alone is the author of life and salvation. • Heavenly Father, raise up God-fearing leaders and prevent us from suffering Tyre’s fate. Amen. (TLSB)

A Lament over the King of Tyre

11 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: 12 “Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. 16 In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”

Because of her “absolutely safe” location, and because of her “absolutely secure” financial standing based on her far-flung commercial ventures, Tyre considered itself to be the god of the sea. She was very proud of what she had accomplished and her present status. (PBC)

28:12 *lamentation.* The defeat and death of the king are so certain to come to pass that Ezekiel is told to raise a lamentation over him in anticipation of his funeral. He will share the fate of all who rise against their Maker in rebellious pride, the primordial sin that destroyed God’s perfect creation.

signet of perfection. When properly handled, the seal makes an accurate copy of the pattern engraved on it. Tyre’s king was a paragon of wisdom and beauty. He exhibited these traits as perfectly as if he were a living facsimile of them in their ideal form. Pride is not a slight misdemeanor but an anti-God orientation of life. It is insidious, for it beguiled God’s creatures when they were perfect in beauty and blameless (cf Ezk 28:15). (TLSB)

In Hag 2:23, Zerubbabel is called God’s “signet ring.” With cutting irony Ezekiel depicts the proud king of Tyre as the first man created, radiant with wisdom and beauty. (CSB)

28:13 The proud monarch claimed to sit in the seat of the gods (v 2). In this Eden, he was covered with precious stones and walked amid the stones of fire (v 14). (TLSB)

You were in Eden.† Like Adam (Ge 2:15). Ezekiel continues to use imagery of the creation and the fall, borrowed from the accounts of primeval events with which the king of Tyre was familiar. Both Adam and the prince of Tyre were in a position of glory and beauty, and both fell into serious sin (see 31:9, 16, 18). (CSB)

The elegy Ezekiel composed scintillates with figurative allusions to Adam’s fall in Eden and to Satan’s expulsion from heaven to the ground (v 17). As in vv 1–10, the poet borrowed descriptive details from the corrupted mythical accounts of primeval events with which the king of Tyre was acquainted (cf Gn 2). In

the biblical account, the garden of God was an earthly paradise of luxurious trees (cf 31:16, 18; 36:35; J1 2:3). (TLSB)

every precious stone. Unlike Adam, who was naked (Ge 2:25), the king is pictured as a fully clothed priest, ordained (v. 14) to guard God’s holy place. The 9 stones are among the 12 worn by the priest (Ex 28:17–20). (The Septuagint lists all 12.) (CSB)

settings. For the precious stones. (CSB)

as a guardian cherub. Cf. v. 16. The Genesis account has cherubim (plural) stationed at the border of the garden after the expulsion of Adam and Eve (Ge 3:24). Some read “with” instead of “as.” (CSB)

holy mountain of God. Cf. v. 16. This does not reflect the Genesis story. See Isa 14:13 for the figure of God dwelling on a mountain. (CSB)

stones of fire. The precious stones (v. 13; cf. Rev 4:1–6; 21:15–21). (CSB)

28:14–16 The king of Tyre is described as a cherub. Creatures similar to biblical cherubim appear in Phoenician art (see diagram, p 544). Elements of the passage are unclear. (TLSB)

28:14 *an anointed guardian cherub.* This translation, based on the LXX, makes an angelic being the companion and protector of the prince on the holy mountain of God or the gods (as in pagan societies). However, after the king sinned, the same cherub drove him out from his celestial abode and God cast the sinner down to earth (vv 16–17; cf ch 10). The KJV interprets the text as saying that the prince is the cherub who is addressed as the guardian of the garden both here and in v 16.(TLSB)

you were on the holy mountain of God. Perhaps equated with Eden. (TLSB)

stones of fire. Perhaps the stars of ethereal heights (cf Is 14:12–13). (TLSB)

28:16 *abundance of your trade ... filled with violence.* Tyre’s major crime. (CSB)

The figurative language momentarily gives way to a factual description of Tyre’s source of wealth, the basis of its pride. (TLSB)

28:17 *cast you to the ground.* Expulsion from the heavenly garden. (CSB)

The second accusation and ensuing punishment in this verse are sequels to the first ones (28:15–16). Here the themes of 28:2 and 28:7 are highlighted: overweening pride in “beauty/splendor” and “wisdom.” They were gifts of God to be received with thanksgiving and to be used to his glory, not a means of self-aggrandizement. As the king of Tyre had once flaunted them before his fellow kings, now they will gloat over his downfall into “the netherworld,” that is, hell, often called Sheol (see the textual note on רְחֵל in this sense here in 28:17). He who was once ensconced in the garden on “the holy mountain of God” (28:14) is now consigned to the underworld. (CC)

28:18 *your sanctuaries.* By the multitude of iniquities, he profaned the sacred precincts on the holy mountain (v 14). (TLSB)

28:11–19 The funerary song continues. The rulers of Tyre once adorned themselves with precious stones like those that once adorned the high priest’s vestment (v 13). Tyre’s trade among nations brought wealth

almost like that of the Garden of Eden (v 13). However, the sin of self-pride brought unrighteousness (v 15). Pride may replace wisdom in our lives as well. In response to our self-delusion, Jesus humbled Himself by taking up the cross to bear our sin and raise us up from the depths of corruption. • Father, nations like Tyre warn us against sinful pride. Send Your Spirit, that we may heed Your warning and trust in Your humble, righteous Son. Amen. (TLSB)

Prophecy Against Sidon

20 The word of the LORD came to me: 21 “Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, and prophesy against her 22 and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I will manifest my glory in your midst. And they shall know that I am the LORD when I execute judgments in her and manifest my holiness in her; 23 for I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the slain shall fall in her midst, by the sword that is against her on every side. Then they will know that I am the LORD. 24 “And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.

28:21 *Sidon*. This is the only time in the OT that Sidon is mentioned apart from Tyre (cf. Isa 23:1–4; Jer 47:4; Joel 3:4; Zec 9:2). (CSB)

Situated c 25 mi N of Tyre, Sidon will share the fate of her sister city. (TLSB)

28:22 *I am against you*. Possibly because of Sidon’s involvement in the Jerusalem summit conference. (CSB)

I will manifest my glory in your midst. The Lord’s glory would be recognized in Sidon’s punishment. (CSB)

28:24–26 In marked contrast to Tyre and Sidon, the house of Israel has a glorious future. The chosen people will survive captivity, return from exile, and dwell securely in their own land. So God’s plan of salvation, seemingly thwarted by the exile, will again get under way. Rescued from sin’s bondage, a spiritual Israel will be gathered from all nations under the blissful rule of the Messiah, described in chs 33–48. (Cf Is 43:1–28; 52:1–15; 58–66; Jer 23:1–8; 33.) Iren: “The church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament ‘raises up from the stones children unto Abraham,’ is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations” (ANF 1:563–64). (TLSB)

28:20–24 God speaks against Sidon. He desires to be exalted among all the nations (Ps 46:10). He will make His glory known in judgment (Ezk 28:22–23) but finally in mercy. Notice God’s gracious promise of Israel’s return from their Babylonian captivity (v 24). He promises to hallow and glorify His people through Christ Jesus (cf Rm 8:18; 1Co 1:30). • Lord, You graciously work for the salvation of many. May we learn to appreciate Your ways and partake of Your glorious goodness. Amen. (TLSB)

Israel Gathered in Security

25 “Thus says the Lord GOD: When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and manifest my holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they shall dwell in their own land that I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 And they shall dwell securely in it, and they shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell securely, when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.”

28:25 *When I gather ... Israel.* A frequent promise in Ezekiel and later (see 11:17; 20:34, 41–42; 29:13; 34:13; 36:24; 37:21; 38:8; 39:27; Ne 1:9; Zec 10:8, 10). (CSB)

my servant Jacob. Cf. 37:25. For the promise see Ge 28:13; 35:12; Ps 105:10–11. (CSB)

28:26 *dwell securely.* A perennial ideal that had become an especially meaningful promise (cf. 34:28; 38:8, 11, 14; 39:26; Lev 25:18–19; Jer 23:6; 32:37; 33:16). (CSB)

houses ... vineyards. Basic necessities of the good life (cf. Isa 65:21; Jer 29:5, 28; Am 9:14). (CSB)

28:25–26 God plans to lead Israel back into the land promised to their ancestors. In this instance, God directs Israel back to His covenant with their namesake Jacob—“Israel” (Gn 28:13–15; 32:28). God’s mercy provides a recurring theme throughout the Bible. His promises point to the cross, where He willingly sacrificed His Son—the ultimate judgment against sin and the fullness of our redemption. • Lord, You are faithful; through Baptism, You have called us out of sin into eternal life. Strengthen us through Holy Communion and protect us with Your Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)