Ezekiel 28

The Fall of the Proud King: Tyre, Sidon and a Gathered Israel

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

Pride says "I am a god" — and behind every proud throne stands the first proud rebel. God tears down the one who lifts himself up, whether a merchant king or the anointed cherub. But He gathers His humbled people and lets them live in safety, so that everyone will know He alone is the LORD.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 28 (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 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ⚠ thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, ⚠ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; ◷ yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

3 Behold, thou art ◷ wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

4 With thy ⇄ wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:

5 By thy great ⇄ wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and ⚠ thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

6 Therefore ▲ thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;

7 Behold, therefore ▲ I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy ⇄ wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

8 They shall ⚠ bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

9 Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee.

10 Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

11 Moreover ⇄ the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

12 Son of man, ▮ take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of ⇄ wisdom, and ◷ perfect in beauty.

13 ◷ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou art ⇄ the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, ⚠ till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have ⚠ filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore ▲ I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 ⚠ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy ⇄ wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

18 ⚠ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more .

20 Again ⇄ the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it,

22 And say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

23 For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

24 And there shall be ★ no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

25 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ★ When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.

26 And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, ★ they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ The word of the LORD came *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ thine heart is lifted up
- **v2** ⚠ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God
- **v2** yet thou art a man, and not God
- **v3** wiser than Daniel
- **v4** ⇄ wisdom *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** ⚠ thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches
- **v7** ▲ I will bring strangers upon thee
- **v8** ⚠ bring thee down to the pit
- **v12** take up a lamentation
- **v12** perfect in beauty
- **v13** Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God
- **v14** ⇄ the anointed cherub that covereth
- **v15** ⚠ till iniquity was found in thee
- **v16** ⚠ filled the midst of thee with violence
- **v16** ▲ I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God
- **v17** ⚠ Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty
- **v18** ⚠ Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries
- **v22** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon
- **v22** ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee
- **v22** ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v24** ★ no more a pricking brier
- **v25** ★ When I shall have gathered the house of Israel
- **v26** ★ they shall dwell with confidence

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 28:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ⚠ thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, ⚠ I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; ◷ yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

Setting

This chapter closes Ezekiel's long oracle against Tyre (chs 26–28), dated "in the eleventh year" (26:1) — about 587/586 BC, the year Jerusalem fell. Tyre was the great Phoenician sea-trading city, built mostly on an island off the coast, and it had cheered Jerusalem's fall as a chance for more business (26:2). Nebuchadnezzar would besiege it for thirteen years (about 586–573 BC). Chapter 28 has no new date. It moves from Tyre's ruler (vv1–19) to its sister city Sidon (vv20–24), and ends with a promise to Israel (vv25–26).

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the prince who says "I am a god":** "say to the leader of Tyre … 'Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods"'" (v2). God answers: "Yet you are a man and not God" (v2). He is "wiser than Daniel" (v3), and his wisdom has made him rich — "your heart is lifted up because of your riches" (v5).
- vv6–10 — **brought down by strangers:** "Because you have made your heart Like the heart of God" (v6), God will bring strangers, "the most ruthless of the nations" (v7), who will "defile your splendor" (v7) and "bring you down to the pit" (v8). "Will you still say, 'I am a god,'" in front of the man who kills you? (v9). "You will die the death of the uncircumcised" (v10).
- vv11–15 — **a lament over the king of Tyre:** "take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre" (v12). "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (v12). "You were in Eden, the garden of God" (v13), covered in precious stones. "You were the anointed cherub who covers" (v14); "You were on the holy mountain of God" (v14). "You were blameless in your ways … Until unrighteousness was found in you" (v15).
- vv16–19 — **the fall:** "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned" (v16). "I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God" (v16). "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor" (v17). "I cast you to the ground" (v17). "You profaned your sanctuaries" (v18). Fire from within consumes him: "you will cease to be forever" (v19).
- vv20–24 — **against Sidon:** "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, And I will be glorified in your midst" (v22). Pestilence and sword come (v23), and Israel will have no more "a prickling brier or a painful thorn" from its scornful neighbors (v24).

- vv25–26 — **Israel gathered and safe:** "When I gather the house of Israel" (v25), they will live in the land God gave "My servant Jacob" (v25). "They will live in it securely" — building houses, planting vineyards (v26). "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God" (v26).

Repeated words

Thus says the Lord GOD (vv2, 6, 12, 22, 25); wisdom (vv4, 5, 7, 12, 17); heart (vv2, 5, 6, 8, 17); trade (vv5, 16, 18); beauty (vv7, 12, 17); splendor (vv7, 17); strangers (vv7, 10); they will know that I am the LORD / the Lord GOD (vv22, 23, 24, 26).

Contrasts

"I am a god" (v2) ⟷ "you are a man and not God" (v2). The seat of gods (v2) ⟷ the pit (v8). Blameless from creation (v15) ⟷ unrighteousness found (v15). The holy mountain of God (v14) ⟷ cast to the ground (v17). Wisdom (v12) ⟷ wisdom corrupted (v17). Tyre's sanctuaries (v18) ⟷ God manifesting His holiness (vv22, 25). Israel scattered and scorned (vv24–25) ⟷ Israel living securely (v26).

Chapter theme (my words)

Pride says "I am a god" — and behind every proud throne stands the first proud rebel. God tears down the one who lifts himself up, whether a merchant king or the anointed cherub. But He gathers His humbled people and lets them live in safety, so that everyone will know He alone is the LORD.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 28:22 (KJV)

22 And say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and ▲ I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her.

The prince of Tyre (vv1–5)

The "leader" (Hebrew *nagid*) of Tyre was probably Ithobaal II, whom Guzik notes Feinberg identifies (Josephus calls him Ithobalus). Ancient kings often claimed divine status, and Tyre thought of itself as untouchable — an island fortress "in the heart of the seas." Taylor, in Guzik, says Tyre saw itself as "all-powerful, superhuman and virtually eternal." "Wiser than Daniel" (v3) is sarcasm: Daniel, then serving in Babylon, was famous for wisdom (Dan 1:20; 2:48). Guzik stresses that God doesn't condemn his skill or his money. Block, in Guzik: "Significantly, the prophet castigates him neither for his shrewdness nor for his amassed wealth." The sin is what wealth did to his heart — it was "lifted up" (v5). Taylor, in Guzik, contrasts Daniel as "a classic example of a man whose head was not turned by his success."

The strangers (vv6–10)

The "strangers" are the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, the "most ruthless of the nations" (compare 30:11). Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege wore Tyre down (29:18), and later Alexander

the Great destroyed the island city in 332 BC. The point of vv9–10 is exposure: a "god" bleeds like any man. Feinberg, in Guzik: "Claims of deity and superhuman powers would mean nothing to the invaders." To "die the death of the uncircumcised" (v10) meant a shameful death, outside God's covenant people. Wiersbe, in Guzik: "World leaders who ignore the Lord and act as if they are gods will all be exposed and judged."

Who is the king of Tyre? (vv11–19)

The lament suddenly uses language far beyond any human king — Eden, a cherub, the holy mountain, stones of fire, created blameless. Christians read it three main ways:

- **The human king in poetic dress** — Ezekiel uses Eden and temple imagery as royal hyperbole to mock the king's self-image (the view of many modern commentators).
- **An Adam figure** — the king is pictured as a new Adam who was placed in Eden and fell.
- **Satan behind the king** — the language points past the man to the spiritual power driving him, as Isaiah 14 does with the king of Babylon.

Guzik holds the third view: "The power behind the prince of Tyre – the true king of Tyre – was Satan himself." He rejects the Adam reading because Adam was never "the anointed cherub." Morgan, in Guzik, calls the passage "the most graphic and illuminating portrayal of Satan to be found in the whole Bible." Wright, in Guzik, sees "a blend of the king of Tyre and his master." Either way, the lesson holds: the same pride runs from the first rebel to the proud human ruler.

The fall (vv15–19)

He was "blameless" (*tamim*, complete, whole) until "unrighteousness was found" in him (v15). Guzik: "Satan's sin was prompted by *pride*" — a heart lifted up "because of your beauty" (v17; compare 1 Tim 3:6). Trade bred violence (v16), and Tyre's many temples were profaned (v18). Guzik traces several stages in Satan's fall: cast from glory as profane (here; Luke 10:18), later losing access to heaven (Rev 12:7–9), confined to the pit (Rev 20:1–3), and finally the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). The fire comes "from the midst of you" (v18) — sin carries its own destruction inside it.

Sidon (vv20–24)

Sidon, Tyre's older neighbor about twenty miles up the coast, was the home of Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (1 Kgs 16:31) — Clarke, in Guzik, draws that link. By Ezekiel's day it was a smaller power. God says He will be "glorified" (*kabad*) and will "manifest My holiness" (*qadash*) in her — His judgments show who He is. Block, in Guzik, notes that Nebuchadnezzar's court records list the king of Sidon among his subjects. For Israel this means relief: no more "prickling brier" (v24) — the word *sallon* appears elsewhere only in 2:6, where Ezekiel himself sat among briers and thorns.

Israel gathered (vv25–26)

In the middle of eight chapters of judgment on the nations (chs 25–32), God pauses to promise His own people a future. Views differ on fulfillment: some see it completed in the return from Babylon; some apply it spiritually to the church; others expect a future, literal regathering of Israel. Guzik holds that the return from exile was a partial fulfillment, with "a greater and perfect fulfillment to come," and he says the regathering "reached a significant milestone in 1948." He rejects Trapp's view that the promise is conditional: "Yet such a condition is nowhere mentioned in this and similar promises."

Word study (Hebrew)

- **leader — *nagid* (H5057):** a ruler, prince, one in front.
- **lifted up — *gabah* (H1361):** to be high, haughty, proud.
- **god — *el* (H410):** god, mighty one.
- **wisdom — *chokmah* (H2451):** skill, wisdom.
- **trade — *rekullah* (H7404):** merchandise, trading — used only in Ezekiel (26:12; 28:5, 16, 18).
- **strangers — *zur* (H2114):** foreigners, outsiders.
- **splendor — *yiphah* (H3314):** brightness, beauty.
- **uncircumcised — *arel* (H6189):** outside the covenant; a shameful death.
- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a funeral dirge.
- **perfection — *toknith* (H8508):** pattern, measure, proportion.
- **cherub — *kerub* (H3742):** a guardian angelic being near God's throne.
- **anointed — *mimshach* (H4473):** anointing, or outspread (wings); found only here.
- **blameless — *tamim* (H8549):** complete, whole, without blemish.
- **unrighteousness — *avlah* (H5766):** injustice, wickedness.
- **profane — *chalal* (H2490):** to defile, treat as common.
- **brier — *sallon* (H5544):** a thorn, prickle.
- **securely — *betach* (H983):** safety, confidence.

Cross-references

Gen 3:1–5; 1 Kgs 16:31; Isa 14:12–15; Isa 23:1–18; Ezek 26:1–27:36; Ezek 29:17–18; Dan 1:20; Prov 16:18; Matt 11:21–22; Luke 10:18; Acts 12:21–23; 1 Tim 3:6; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5–8; Rev 12:7–9; Rev 18:9–19; Rev 20:10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 28:12 (KJV)

12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

Command to obey — "take up a lamentation."

God told Ezekiel to sing a funeral song over a proud king (v12). God doesn't gloat over the fall of the proud; He grieves it. I want to weep, not cheer, when proud people crash — and to warn them while there is still time.

Sin to confess — a heart lifted up

The prince's success turned his head (v5). Every time a book sells, a site launches, or a man I've walked with stands strong, I'm tempted to sit in "the seat of gods." I'll confess the quiet pride that takes credit

for what God has done, and say plainly: I am a man and not God (v2).

Warning to heed — the fire from within

God brought fire "from the midst of you" (v18). Sin doesn't need an outside enemy to destroy me — it burns from the inside. Many of the men I disciple know this firsthand: the addiction that promised power and pleasure turned into the fire that consumed home, job and freedom. The warning isn't only for kings. Pride and sin always end in ashes.

Promise to trust — "They will live in it securely."

God promises to gather the scattered and let them build houses and plant vineyards (v26). For a man walking out of prison or out of rehab with nothing, this is the heart of God: He restores, He plants, He gives a place to live in safety. The briers and thorns that mocked you will not have the last word (v24).

Example to follow — Daniel, not the prince

The prince thought he was "wiser than Daniel" (v3), but Daniel was the one whose head was never turned by success. I want to be like the real Daniel — gifted, trusted, honored, and still on my knees.

Worship

You alone are God. You sit on the true throne. You cast down the proud and gather the humble. You will be glorified, and the nations will know that You are the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, I am a man and not God. Search my heart for every place where it is lifted up because of my gifts or my work. Keep me from the pride that brought down the anointed cherub. Gather the scattered men I serve, plant them, and let them live securely in You. Be glorified in my life. Amen.