

Ezekiel 27:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches (מֶרֶב כָּל־הֹנָה, merov kol-hon)—Damascus, Aram's capital and one of the ancient world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, traded with Tyre due to the abundance (rov) of both Tyre's manufactured goods (ma'asayikh) and Damascus's own wealth (hon). **In the wine of Helbon, and white wool** (בְּיַיִן חֶלְבוֹן וְצִמָּר צָהָר, beyein Chelbon vetsemer tsachar)—Helbon (near Damascus) produced wine so famous that Persian kings demanded it (attested in ancient sources). Tsemer tsachar ("white wool") indicates premium quality, likely from prized Damascus-area sheep.

Even Damascus, Israel's historic enemy (2 Kings 16:9), participated in Tyre's commercial web. The wine of Helbon contrasts with the wine of communion (Luke 22:20)—one for commercial pleasure, the other for covenant remembrance. Tyre's judgment demonstrates that economic alliances transcending spiritual enmities cannot ultimately save (Isaiah 31:1-3). All who trade with Babylon/Tyre share her judgment (Revelation 18:4).

Historical Context

Damascus, located at a desert oasis on major trade routes, was one of the world's oldest cities (mentioned in Genesis 14:15). By Ezekiel's time it had recovered from Assyrian conquest and was a major commercial power. Helbon (likely modern

Halbun, 15 miles north of Damascus) was renowned for viticulture—classical sources mention Persian kings preferring Helbon wine. The Damascus region's white wool was prized throughout antiquity. The city's strategic location made it a natural trading partner for Phoenician coastal cities, facilitating commerce between Mediterranean and Mesopotamian/Arabian markets.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do economic partnerships with those hostile to God's purposes compromise spiritual integrity, despite appearing profitable?
2. What is the difference between the "wine of Helbon" (luxury consumption) and the wine of Christ's covenant (sacrificial communion)?

Interlinear Text

דָּמָשְׁקַ	סַחֲרֵי־ךָ	מֵרַב	מַעֲשֵׂי־יָדְךָ
Damascus	was thy merchant	for the multitude	of the wares of thy making
H1834	H5503	H7230	H4639

מֵרַב	כָּל	הָוֶן	בֵּי־יַיִן	חֶלְבֹן	וּצְוֹל	צֹהָרִים
for the multitude		of all riches	in the wine	of Helbon	wool	and white
H7230	H3605	H1952	H3196	H2463	H6785	H6713

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:8 (Parallel theme): For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

