

Ezekiel 27:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats (כָּרִים וְאַלִּים וְעַתְּדִים karim ve'elim ve'attudim)—Kedar was a powerful Bedouin confederation descended from Ishmael (Genesis 25:13), controlling the Arabian desert trade routes. The three categories of livestock represent graduated quality and value: karim (young lambs for meat), elim (mature rams for breeding and sacrifice), and attudim (male goats, leaders of flocks).

Isaiah prophesied that Kedar's flocks would one day come to Jerusalem to honor Yahweh (Isaiah 60:7), transforming mere commercial exchange into worship. Here in Ezekiel, however, these same flocks serve Tyre's prideful self-glorification. The identical goods can serve either God's glory or human vanity—the critical difference lies in the heart's direction.

Historical Context

Kedar dominated the Arabian peninsula from the 8th-6th centuries BC, mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions as fierce warriors and traders. Their black goat-hair tents were famous (Song of Solomon 1:5). Kedar's livestock trade with Tyre would have supplied animals for both food and religious sacrifices in the polytheistic temples of Phoenicia. The Nabataeans later displaced Kedar's commercial dominance.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How can the same resources (like Kedar's flocks) serve either God's glory or human pride depending on our motivations?
2. What gifts or talents do you possess that could be redirected from self-serving pursuits to worshipful service of God?

Interlinear Text

Arabia	H3605	and all the princes	of Kedar	H1992
	H6152		H5387	H6938
in these were they thy merchants	H5503	with thee	H3027	in lambs
				H3733
				and rams
				H352
				and goats
				H6260
וְאַתָּה	H0	סְפִירָה:		
		in these were they thy merchants		
		H5503		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 60:7 (Parallel theme): All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Genesis 25:13 (Parallel theme): And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

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