

Ezekiel 27:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold.

Analysis

The merchants of Sheba and Raamah... occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold רָאשׁ כָּל-בָּשָׂם וּבָכָל-אָבָן יְקָרָה) Even yeqarah (precious stones) and zahav (gold) Sheba (modern Yemen) and Raamah (possibly near modern Najran, Saudi Arabia) controlled the fabled incense route. The Hebrew *rosh kol-bosem* means "the chief/best of all spices"—frankincense and myrrh, worth their weight in gold. These are the same gifts the wise men brought to Christ (Matthew 2:11), connecting ancient commerce to messianic worship.

Even yeqarah (precious stones) and zahav (gold) echo Eden's description (Genesis 2:11-12) and foreshadow the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:18-21). Tyre accumulated paradise's treasures but lacked paradise's righteousness. Material wealth without spiritual truth produces only judgment.

Historical Context

The South Arabian kingdoms (Sheba, Raamah) monopolized the incense trade for centuries, growing fabulously wealthy. Archaeological excavations at Timna (Yemen) confirm extensive frankincense production. A camel caravan from Sheba to Tyre would take 3-4 months, making spices extraordinarily valuable. The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon (1 Kings 10) demonstrates these ancient commercial ties between Arabia and the Levant.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the connection between Sheba's trade goods and the wise men's gifts to Jesus transform your understanding of commerce as potentially pointing toward worship?
2. What "treasures" in your life—whether material or spiritual—are you hoarding for yourself rather than offering to Christ?

Interlinear Text

רְכָלִים	שְׁבָא	וּרְעָם הַ	הַמָּה	רְכָלִים	בָּרָאשׁ	כָּל
The merchants	of Sheba	and Raamah	H1992	The merchants	with chief	H3605
H7402	H7614	H7484		H7402	H7218	
נָתַן 1	זְהָב בָּ	יִקְרָה	אֶתן וּבְכָל	בָּשָׂם	of all spices	of
					H3605	
			stones	and with all precious	they occupied	
H1314	H68	H3368		H2091	H5414	

עַזְבּוֹנִים
in thy fairs

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 10:7 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha; and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

Isaiah 60:6 (Parallel theme): The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.

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