

Ezekiel 27:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

Analysis

Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim—Ezekiel describes Tyre as a magnificent ship, using the extended ship metaphor (verses 5-11) to depict the city's commercial glory. The Hebrew allonim miBashan (אַלְזָכִים מִבָּשָׁן, "oaks of Bashan") refers to the strongest timber from the Golan Heights region, famous for mighty oaks (Isaiah 2:13, Zechariah 11:2). Tyre's oars required the finest, most durable wood—symbolizing strength and quality in construction.

"The company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory"—The Hebrew bat-ashur (בָּתַּאֲשָׁר) likely means "daughter of Asshur" or craftsmen from Cyprus (not Assyria, which was Ashur). Ivory inlaid benches demonstrate luxury—ivory came from Syrian elephants (now extinct) or African trade. **"Brought out of the isles of Chittim"** (iyey Kittim, אֵי כִּתְמִים refers to Cyprus, famous for timber and copper. This verse shows Tyre's international supply chain: Bashan oaks, Cypriot craftsmen, African ivory—a global economic network dependent on maritime trade. When the ship sinks (verse 26-27), the entire system collapses.

Historical Context

Bashan (modern Golan Heights) was renowned for oak forests and cattle (Psalm 22:12, Amos 4:1). Archaeological evidence confirms extensive ancient oak forests

in the region. Cyprus (Kittim) was a major Phoenician colony and trade hub—excavations reveal Phoenician settlements and shipbuilding facilities. Ivory carving was a Phoenician specialty; archaeologists have discovered ornate ivory furniture fragments from Phoenician sites. Tyre's ships were engineering marvels—multi-decked merchant vessels capable of Mediterranean crossings. The detail in Ezekiel's description (which continues through verse 11) shows God's intimate knowledge of human commerce and His sovereignty over economic systems that seem autonomous.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Tyre's dependence on international resources from Bashan to Cyprus illustrate the fragility of globalized economic systems?
2. What does the luxurious detail (ivory benches, finest oaks) reveal about human tendency to invest ultimate value in material excellence?

Interlinear Text

שָׁן עָשָׂו קְרִישׁ הַמְשׁוּטִים עָשָׂו מִכְּבָשׁוֹן אֶלְזִנִּים
Of the oaks of Bashan have made thine oars thy benches have made of ivory
H437 H1316 H6213 H4880 H7175 H6213 H8127

בַּת אֲשֶׁר יָמִינָה מִצְרָיִם כְּתִים:
the company of the Ashurites brought out of the isles of Chittim
H1323 H839 H339 H3794

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 2:13 (Parallel theme): And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

Genesis 10:4 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

Zechariah 11:2 (Parallel theme): Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

Jeremiah 2:10 (Parallel theme): For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

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