

Ezekiel 27:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots.

Analysis

The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners (מַלְחֵיךָ מִלְּחֵיךָ, mallachayikh)—the Hebrew mallach means "sailor" or "mariner," emphasizing Tyre's dependence on foreign expertise. Zidon (Sidon) was Tyre's sister Phoenician city-state, while Arvad was a northern Phoenician island fortress. Yet Tyre employed these rivals as mere oarsmen, reserving **thy wise men...thy pilots** (חֲכָמֶיךָ הַמָּה חֹבְלֶיךָ, chakamayikh...chobhlayikh) for themselves. The chobhel (pilot/captain) required wisdom (chokmah), not just skill—highlighting Tyre's pride in intellectual superiority.

This verse reveals the economic hierarchy that fueled Tyre's arrogance: foreign labor beneath Tyrian management. God's judgment targets not merely commerce, but the pride that made Tyre say "I am of perfect beauty" (v. 3). Compare Revelation 18's "Babylon," another commercial empire judged for self-exaltation.

Historical Context

Zidon (modern Sidon, Lebanon) was Phoenicia's oldest city, mentioned in Genesis 10:15. Arvad (modern Arwad, Syria) was the northernmost Phoenician city-state, built entirely on an island. By Ezekiel's time (586 BC), Tyre had eclipsed both cities commercially, employing their seamen while monopolizing navigation expertise. Archaeological evidence shows Phoenician ships required crews of 20-30 oarsmen, with pilots navigating by stars and coastal landmarks.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does reliance on others' labor while hoarding knowledge and status reflect pride that invites God's judgment?
2. In what ways does modern economic hierarchy mirror Tyre's system of foreign workers and domestic elites?

Interlinear Text

יֹשְׁבֵי י	צִידוֹן	וְאַרְבַּד	הֵיוּ	שָׂטִיִּים	לְךָ	חֲכָמִיךָ
The inhabitants	of Zidon	and Arvad	H1961	were thy mariners	H0	thy wise
H3427	H6721	H719		H7751		H2450
צֹר	הֵיוּ	בְּךָ	הַמָּה	חֲבָלֶיךָ:		
men O Tyrus	H1961	H0	H1992	that were in thee were thy pilots		
H6865				H2259		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 10:18 (Parallel theme): And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

1 Kings 9:27 (Parallel theme): And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

Ezekiel 27:11 (Parallel theme): The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.

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