

Ezekiel 28:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Analysis

The indictment: 'Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.' Pride in beauty and wisdom caused the fall. The Hebrew 'gabah libekha' (גָּבַהַ לִבְךָ, 'your heart was lifted up') identifies pride as root sin. Beauty became occasion for vanity, wisdom for arrogance, brightness for self-glory. The progression is tragic—gifts meant to glorify God became mirrors for self-admiration. God's response is humiliation: 'I will cast thee to the ground' and expose this fallen being 'before kings' for public judgment. What sought exaltation through pride receives degradation through judgment. This pattern appears throughout Scripture—'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble' (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5). Pride reverses itself—those who exalt themselves will be humbled (Luke 14:11).

Historical Context

Whether applied primarily to Tyre's historical king or to Satan's cosmic rebellion, this verse reveals pride's mechanism: God-given attributes become occasions for self-glory rather than Creator-worship. Tyre's commercial success, architectural achievements, and cultural sophistication bred arrogance. If the passage also describes Satan, it explains how the most beautiful and wise created being fell—by

turning attributes meant for God's glory toward self-exaltation. The public humiliation ('lay thee before kings') was fulfilled historically when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre (585-572 BC) and when Alexander the Great conquered it (332 BC). Ultimately, Satan's complete defeat will be publicly manifested at Christ's return (Revelation 20:10).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do your God-given gifts, achievements, or attributes tempt you toward pride rather than worship?
2. What practices help you guard against corrupting wisdom and beauty through self-focused brightness?

Interlinear Text

נָבַחַ was lifted up H1361	לִבְךָ Thine heart H3820	בְּיָפִיךָ because of thy beauty H3308	שָׁחַתָּ thou hast corrupted H7843	חִכְמָתְךָ thy wisdom H2451
עַל by reason of H5921	יְפָעֶתְךָ thy brightness H3314	עַל by reason of H5921	אֶרֶץ thee to the ground H776	הִשְׁלַכְתִּי I will cast H7993
לְפָנַי thee before H6440	מְלָכִים kings H4428	נִתַּתִּי I will lay H5414	לְבָאֵהָ that they may behold H7200	בְּךָ H0

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 28:5 (Parallel theme): By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

Ezekiel 31:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height;

Ezekiel 28:2 (Parallel theme): Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

James 4:6 (Parallel theme): But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.