

Proverbs 31:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

Analysis

She is like the merchants' ships—The Hebrew *oniyot socher* (אֲנִיּוֹת סוֹחֵר, merchant vessels) references Phoenician trading ships that brought exotic goods from distant ports. **She bringeth her food from afar** (מִמֶּרְחָק תָּבִיא לֶחֶמָה, *mimerchaq tavi lachmah*)—not mere geographic distance but economic sophistication. She imports quality goods, understanding markets and value.

This is economic wisdom, not consumerism. Like Solomon who traded with Tyre and Tarshish (1 Kings 10:22), she exercises global stewardship. The image subverts assumptions—the 'homemaker' is actually an international trader. This anticipates the church's global mission (Acts 1:8) and reminds us that godliness embraces rather than retreats from creation's fullness. All legitimate commerce participates in God's blessing of the nations.

Historical Context

Phoenician ships (especially from Tyre and Sidon) dominated Mediterranean trade, bringing precious goods—spices, dyes (purple from murex), fine linen, metals—unavailable locally. Israelite access to these trade networks (through ports like Joppa) reflected covenant blessing and international engagement.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge false dichotomies between 'spiritual' and 'secular' work—is commerce part of godly stewardship?
2. What does it mean to 'bring food from afar' in your context—pursuing excellence and value rather than mere convenience?
3. How might the global nature of the church's mission be foreshadowed in this woman's international trading?

Interlinear Text

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| הַ יְתָה | כָּאֵנִי וְתָה | סוֹחֵר | מִמְרוֹק | תָּבִיא |
| H1961 | ' ships | She is like the merchants | from afar | she bringeth |
| | H591 | H5503 | H4801 | H935 |

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| לֶחֱמָהּ: |
| her food |
| H3899 |

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