

# Zechariah 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

## Analysis

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**And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise**—the oracle's geographic scope expands northward to Hamath and westward to the Phoenician coast. "**Hamath also shall border thereby**" means this Syrian city, even farther north than Damascus, falls within the judgment's boundary. Hamath (modern Hama) marked Israel's traditional northern border (Numbers 34:8; 1 Kings 8:65), representing the limit of Solomonic territory and the extent of the Promised Land's ideal boundaries.

The shift to Phoenicia introduces "**Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise**" (ve-Tzor ve-Tzidon ki chakhmah me'od, תְּצַוֵּר וְצִדּוֹן קִי חָכָמָה מְאֹד). Tyre and Sidon, ancient maritime powers, were renowned for commercial acumen, wealth, and sophisticated culture. The concessive phrase "**though it be very wise**" carries bitter irony—their celebrated wisdom (chokmah, חָכָמָה) cannot save them from God's judgment. This echoes prophetic critiques of worldly wisdom apart from the fear of the LORD (Proverbs 1:7; Isaiah 47:10; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

Phoenician wisdom included seamanship, trade networks, architectural skill (they built Solomon's temple—1 Kings 5:1-12), and cultural sophistication. Yet divine judgment makes no exception for human achievement or intelligence. The phrase anticipates verse 3-4's description of Tyre's impressive fortifications and wealth, all powerless against the LORD's decree. True wisdom begins with fearing God; all other wisdom, however impressive, proves futile when opposing divine purposes.

## Historical Context

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Tyre and Sidon dominated Mediterranean trade for centuries, establishing colonies as far as Carthage and Spain. Their maritime expertise, purple dye production (from murex shellfish), and trading networks made them immensely wealthy. Phoenician sailors circumnavigated Africa (Herodotus 4.42) and may have reached Britain. This commercial and cultural dominance earned them a reputation for wisdom. Hiram of Tyre allied with David and Solomon, providing materials and craftsmen for Jerusalem's temple (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5-7).

However, Phoenicia also promoted Baal worship, which corrupted Israel through Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31-33). Prophets repeatedly condemned Tyre and Sidon (Isaiah 23; Ezekiel 26-28; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10). Ezekiel 28's oracle against Tyre's king uses language suggesting demonic pride underlying human arrogance. Alexander the Great besieged Tyre for seven months (332 BC), finally conquering it by building a causeway to the island fortress—partial fulfillment of Ezekiel 26:12 and Zechariah 9:4. Jesus later ministered in this region (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-31), bringing the gospel to formerly pagan territory, demonstrating the spiritual conquest following military judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's judgment on Tyre's celebrated wisdom challenge modern confidence in human intelligence, technology, and achievement apart from reverence for God?

2. What does Phoenicia's fate teach about the limits of wealth and cultural sophistication when confronting divine justice?
3. How should believers balance engaging with secular wisdom while recognizing that 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom'?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאַתָּה חֲמָת תַּגְבֵּל בְּכָל־צִדּוֹן וְאַתָּה  
 H1571 And Hamath also shall border H1379 H0 thereby H6865 H3588  
 H2574 H3966 H6721

מְאַד כַּמֵּה הִנֵּה  
 very though it be wise H3966

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 49:23** (Parallel theme): Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.

**Ezekiel 28:12** (Parallel theme): Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.