

The Book of Ezekiel, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 12: The Fall of Tyre and Its Proud Prince

Ezekiel 27:1-28:26

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Show through the picture of the merchant ship that earthly glory and wealth, however splendid, are fragile and cannot save when the LORD brings them down.

Expose the root sin of pride in the prince of Tyre who said I am a god, and press the foundational truth that man is creature, not Creator.

Lead the class from the fall of the proud to the promise that God gathers and blesses His humble people, calling each one to trade pride for trust in the LORD.

Question 1

Student Question:

In chapter 27 Tyre is pictured as a splendid ship perfect in beauty (27:3-11). How does this image set up the tragedy of her ruin, and what does it teach about glory built on human achievement?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The LORD commands Ezekiel to raise a lamentation over Tyre, a funeral dirge sung over the city while she yet stands, so sure is her coming fall.

Tyre is addressed as one who dwells at the entrances to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands (27:3). Her place and her trade are her glory.

Tyre boasts, I am perfect in beauty (27:3). Her borders are in the heart of the seas, and her builders made her beauty complete.

The whole chapter develops a single extended image, Tyre as a magnificent ship, every part fashioned of the finest materials the nations could supply.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A lamentation sung over a city still standing underscores the certainty of God's word. The judgment is so sure it can be mourned in advance.
- Tyre's boast, I am perfect in beauty, is the seed of her ruin. Self-glory invites the humbling hand of God.
- The dirge form is sober, not gloating. It mourns the tragedy of glory wasted in pride rather than celebrating destruction.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the LORD have Ezekiel mourn Tyre before she has fallen?
- What is dangerous about a city or a person claiming to be perfect in beauty?
- How does the lament form keep us from gloating over another's downfall?

Question 2

Student Question:

What in your own life have you come to regard as your perfect in beauty, the thing you most quietly take pride in?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The ship is built from the best the world offers, fir from Senir, cedar from Lebanon for the mast, oaks of Bashan for oars, and sails of fine embroidered linen from Egypt (27:5-7).

Skilled men from Sidon and Arvad were her rowers, and the wise men of Tyre were her pilots. Men of war from many lands hung shield and helmet on her walls.

Every detail magnifies her splendor. The picture is of human craft, wealth, and skill gathered to their highest pitch.

They made your beauty perfect (27:11). The repeated note of perfected beauty fixes attention on the glory that is about to be lost.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The ship's beauty is entirely the work of human hands and borrowed resources, a glory assembled rather than given by God.
- Tyre's strength lay in the contributions of many nations, yet none of them could save her in the day of the LORD.
- The lavish description makes the coming wreck the more tragic, teaching that the higher the earthly glory, the harder the fall.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that all of Tyre's beauty was gathered from the labor of others?
- Why can no amount of human skill secure a people against the LORD's judgment?
- How does the splendor of the ship heighten the lesson of its loss?

Question 3

Student Question:

Tyre traded with the whole known world and grew rich and self-sufficient (27:12–25). Why does Scripture treat self-sufficiency apart from God as a spiritual danger rather than a mark of success?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

A long catalog lists the nations and goods that traded with Tyre, silver, iron, tin, lead, slaves, horses, ivory, ebony, fine cloth, spices, and precious stones.

Tarshish, Javan, Tubal, Damascus, Arabia, Sheba, and many more brought their wares, so that Tyre was filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas (27:25).

The sheer reach of the list shows Tyre at the center of the world's commerce, rich beyond measure and seemingly self-sufficient.

Yet this very abundance is part of the cargo that will go down with her, for all her wealth is bound to a ship the LORD will sink.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Self-sufficiency apart from God is a spiritual danger, not a triumph. Tyre needed nothing from anyone, or so she thought.
- The piling up of riches gives a false sense of permanence, as if a fortune so vast could never be lost.
- Scripture warns the rich not to set their hope on uncertain riches but on God, who alone gives all things (1 Timothy 6:17).

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the Bible treat self-sufficiency apart from God as a danger?
- How can great wealth deceive a person about his real security?
- Where do we look to riches for a permanence they cannot give?

Question 4

Student Question:

Where are you tempted to feel that you need nothing and no one, least of all God, and how does that attitude show itself?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The rowers have brought Tyre out into deep waters, and the east wind has wrecked her in the heart of the seas (27:26).

Her riches, wares, mariners, pilots, and men of war all sink into the heart of the seas on the day of her ruin (27:27).

At the cry of her pilots the coastlands shake, and all who handle the oar come down from their ships to stand on the shore and wail bitterly.

They cast dust on their heads, put on sackcloth, and weep with bitter mourning over the city that was once the queen of the sea.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The suddenness and totality of the wreck show how quickly earthly security can vanish when the LORD acts.
- Everything Tyre trusted in, wealth, skill, and might, sinks together. Nothing she gathered can be carried through judgment.
- The bitter mourning of all who depended on her warns that those who tie their hope to worldly powers share in their fall.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the speed of Tyre's wreck teach about earthly security?
- Why is it significant that all her riches sink with her?
- What is the danger of binding our hope to powers that can fall?

Question 5

Student Question:

The great ship is wrecked in the heart of the seas (27:26–27), and the merchants are appalled. What does the suddenness and totality of Tyre's fall teach about the security of earthly wealth?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

In their wailing the nations take up a dirge, Who is like Tyre, like one destroyed in the midst of the sea? (27:32).

Once she enriched the kings of the earth with her abundant wealth; now she is broken and her merchandise and crew have fallen into the sea.

All the inhabitants of the coastlands are appalled, their kings horribly afraid, their faces troubled at her dreadful end (27:35).

The merchants among the peoples hiss at her, for she has come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever (27:36).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The question Who is like Tyre echoes her former pride, now turned into an epitaph of ruin.
- The horror of the watching kings exposes how false their own security was, propped on the same fragile foundations.

- She shall be no more forever seals the certainty of God's judgment, the same finality declared in the previous chapter.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the dirge turn Tyre's pride into her epitaph?
- Why are the watching kings so terrified by her fall?
- What does the finality of her end teach about the certainty of God's word?

Question 6

Student Question:

When has something you trusted in been suddenly taken away, and what did that loss reveal about where your true security lay?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The word of the LORD comes against the prince of Tyre, whose heart is proud and who has said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas (28:2).

Yet, says the LORD, you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god.

The prince is indeed wise and gifted, wiser in his own eyes than Daniel, and by his wisdom and understanding he has gathered great wealth (28:3-5).

His very gifts have become the occasion of his pride. By his trade and skill his heart has grown proud.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The root sin here is pride that exalts a human heart to the place of deity, the most basic confusion of creature with Creator.
- Real gifts of wisdom and skill, given by God, become deadly when a man credits them to himself and worships himself.
- The LORD's plain answer, you are but a man, restores the fundamental truth that man is a creature accountable to God.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is the line between Creator and creature the most important truth a person can keep in view?
- How can God-given gifts become an occasion for pride?
- What does the LORD's answer, you are but a man, correct in the prince's thinking?

Question 7

Student Question:

The prince of Tyre said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods (28:2), yet the LORD answers, you are but a man, and no god (28:9). Why is the line between Creator and creature the most fundamental truth a person can forget?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Because the prince made his heart like the heart of a god, the LORD will bring strangers against him, the most ruthless of the nations (28:7).

They will draw their swords against the beauty of his wisdom and defile his splendor, thrusting him down to the pit (28:7-8).

Will you still say, I am a god, in the presence of those who kill you? The LORD asks. You are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you (28:9).

He will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of foreigners, for the LORD has spoken (28:10).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The proud claim to deity collapses the moment death draws near. A god cannot be slain, but this man will die.
- God opposes the proud (James 4:6). The prince's exaltation of himself draws the certain judgment of the LORD.
- The certainty of the word, for the LORD has spoken, stands over the prince as it stood over the city. God's word comes to pass.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the nearness of death expose the emptiness of the prince's claim?
- What does it mean that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble?
- Why does Ezekiel repeatedly anchor these oracles in God has spoken?

Question 8**Student Question:**

In what subtle ways do you act as though you were the god of your own life, ordering things by your own will rather than submitting to the LORD?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The LORD has Ezekiel raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, describing him as the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (28:12).

The imagery places him in Eden, the garden of God, adorned with every precious stone, and speaks of an anointed guardian cherub on the holy mountain of God (28:13–14).

We take this picture soberly as a portrait of the king of Tyre, drawing on Eden and cherub imagery to depict a beauty and exaltation that were truly remarkable.

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you (28:15). The fall begins not from without but from within.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- This rich imagery is given first to describe the king of Tyre, so we read it as a portrait of proud beauty rather than a basis for speculative doctrines.
- The language of Eden and the cherub pictures glory at its height, making the coming fall the more sobering.
- The decisive turn is moral, till unrighteousness was found in you, locating the ruin in the king's own corrupted heart.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is it wise to read this lament first as a description of the king of Tyre?
- What does the height of the imagery teach us about the depth of the fall?
- Where does the text locate the origin of the king's ruin?

Question 9

Student Question:

In 28:11–19 the lament over the king of Tyre uses the imagery of Eden and the anointed cherub to portray one full of wisdom and perfect in beauty whose heart was lifted up and who was cast down for his pride and his unrighteous trade. Working carefully through these verses, explain how this picture depicts proud beauty corrupted and brought low, and how it lays bare the very nature of pride. How does Scripture elsewhere confirm that pride goes before destruction, and why must we resist building speculative doctrines from imagery meant first to describe the king of Tyre?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

In the abundance of his trade he was filled with violence and sinned, so the LORD cast him as a profane thing from the mountain of God (28:16).

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor (28:17). Pride lies at the root of the fall.

The LORD cast him to the ground and exposed him before kings, and by his many iniquities and unrighteous trade he profaned his sanctuaries (28:18).

All who knew him among the peoples are appalled; he has come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever (28:19).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The text names the sin plainly, your heart was proud because of your beauty. This lays bare the very nature of pride, glory turned inward into self-worship.
- Scripture elsewhere confirms the pattern, pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).
- The imagery serves this moral lesson and should not be pressed into speculative doctrines beyond its purpose of portraying proud beauty cast down.

Discussion Prompts

- How does this passage define the nature of pride?
- How does Proverbs 16:18 confirm the pattern seen in the king of Tyre?
- Why should we keep this imagery tethered to its lesson about pride rather than building speculation upon it?

Question 10

Student Question:

The section ends with God promising to gather His people and dwell securely among them (28:24–26). After studying the fall of proud Tyre, how does this promise to humble, gathered people shape the way you will live, and where do you most need to trade pride for trust in the LORD?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

A brief oracle against Sidon follows, that the LORD will manifest His glory in her and be known as holy, so that the nations shall know that I am the LORD (28:22–23).

The surrounding nations that have treated Israel with contempt will be a brier and a thorn no longer, their pride and malice broken.

Then the LORD promises, I will gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and they shall dwell in their own land in security (28:25–26).

They will build houses, plant vineyards, and dwell securely when the LORD executes judgments on those who treated them with contempt, and they shall know that I am the LORD their God (28:26).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- After the long account of proud nations cast down, the section turns to grace, God gathering and blessing His humbled, scattered people.
- This promise of gathering and secure dwelling finds its fullness in God's people under Christ, who reigns now over His church and gives true and lasting security.
- The closing refrain, they shall know that I am the LORD, joins judgment and mercy in the one purpose of making God known and trusted.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the LORD follow oracles of judgment with a promise to gather His people?
- How is the promise of secure dwelling fulfilled for God's people in Christ and His church?
- What does it look like to trade the pride of Tyre for the humble trust of those whom God gathers and blesses?