

1. My title for this lesson is "judgment and pride". Anybody who has been a Christian for a considerable length of time has heard sermons about the topic of pride. I'm guessing that if one surveyed most Christian pastors and asked them what is the root of all sin, I would say the number response answer would be "pride". That issue happens to tie well to this chapter.
  - a) I start off with that harsh reality, as that is the key to this chapter. ☺ I promise you that this lesson makes me look at pride issues in my own life and hopefully, you do the same.
  - b) Remember the big picture concept of Chapters 25 through 32 of Ezekiel. In these chapters, Ezekiel is focusing on God's judgment of other nations that surround Israel.
    - i) It would make sense that right in the middle of that "judgment section" to focus on the root cause of sin, which is human pride.
    - ii) God picks as an "ultimate" example of the danger of human pride, the king of Tyre. He is the head person of that location who got rich off world trade and believed he had everything he could ever want in life and didn't need God.
    - iii) The chapter goes on to discuss the spiritual power behind that pride, which is Satan himself. This chapter is also a good spot to discuss Satan's use of "pride" as one of his best weapons to drive people away from serving God.
  - c) There are a few more things to this chapter than a discussion of Tyre's king and Satan.
    - i) The chapter also discusses the subject of a neighboring city of Tyre called Sidon.
      - a) Sidon is a "sister city of Tyre". It is also part of the Phoenician Empire like Tyre, but it does not have the great financial wealth of Tyre.
      - b) Why God picks on Sidon here is not stated. The logical reason is God is picking on all the neighboring places of Israel and Sidon was one of those places. There are only a few verses about Sidon. At this point in history, Sidon was a small city and is "nothing" in comparison to Tyre in its power.
    - ii) Finally, the chapter ends with a positive promise to Israel.
      - a) A question to ask is why is a positive comment given here at the end of all of this judgment and before the four-chapter discussion of Egypt? I'm not sure of the answer, but I'll speculate a little when I get to these verses.
      - b) My personal view is these verses are here to show that if one trusts in God, they are forgiven of their sins and are still saved despite their faults and mistakes. It is to show the contrast between those who are saved (but still sin) versus those who completely turn their back on God despite the evidence of His existence.
  - d) This leads us back to the main issue of this chapter: Dealing with pride. Let me define what I mean and don't mean by pride: The biblical definition of pride is that of putting one's own interest in front of the interest of God or the interest of others.
    - i) The one new commandment of the New Testament is to have love for others. That commandment is about putting the needs of others as a priority over one's own needs. Does that mean we should never focus on our own lives? No. It means when the situation arises of choices to be made, we should think about and try to figure out first, how we can be of help and support to others.
    - ii) To put one's own interest first, no matter how good intentioned it may be, over the interest or desire of God or the need of others, is what the bible calls "pride".
    - iii) Let me add to the definition: Let's say we tell someone to "have some pride" and stand up for himself or herself in a difficult situation. That is not the type of pride the bible is condemning. God is condemning the type of pride where we put our own interest or desires over what God wants for the moment.

2. With that said, let's get back to the main issue of this chapter, which is the king of Tyre and pride.
  - a) The first part focuses on the king of Tyre. As discussed in the last lesson, the city of Tyre is a very wealthy city that trusted in their own wealth for their prosperity. The City of Tyre felt they were in no need of anything as they had grown so rich from trade.
    - i) When Tyre was attacked by the Babylonians, some of that wealth was taken away. Those in Tyre that survived the Babylon siege moved to a nearby island. Less than a few hundred years later, that island city of Tyre was completely destroyed by Alexander the Great and the Grecian army.
    - ii) It would make sense that the king of Tyre would be the center of all of this prosperity and the key person in that city.
    - iii) The secret to studying Chapter 28 is not to see this chapter about a long dead king. The secret is to examine areas of pride in our own life that need dealing with.
    - iv) I heard a line recently that relates well to this point and it has to do with the economic recession at the time of this writing: When the economy died, so did the "god" that many Christians worshipped! (Source Marc Draper.)
  - b) In the second part of this chapter, the focus shifts to the power behind the king of Tyre. Although that power is not mentioned by name, it is pretty obvious it is about Satan.
    - i) For example, the text says the "king of Tyre" was in the Garden of Eden. I know this king of Tyre lived a long time ago, but I can guarantee you that he existed long after the Garden of Eden. Therefore, the text must be talking about the spiritual entity which was behind that king of Tyre, which is Satan himself.
  - c) What is important to catch is the "prince of Tyre" (referring to the king of Tyre) and the "king of Tyre" (referring to Satan) are condemned separately in separate visions.
    - i) That fact is important. One thing people cannot get away with in "judgment day" is the concept of the "devil made me do it". Just as we have the free will to follow God or reject God, so we have the free will to accept or reject Satan.
    - ii) My point is that even though Satan Himself is rejected and condemned in Chapter 28, the people Satan influenced are also judged. Those people can't get around God's judgment just because they were influenced by Satan himself.
    - iii) This leads to another question: Why would Satan be mentioned "only now"? Wouldn't the power of Satan also be behind the other nations that were listed in Chapter 25? Wouldn't Satan also be behind "Egypt" which is discussed in Chapters 29 through 32? Why mention Satan only here?
      - a) If I had to guess (and it's just that), I think it is because Satan likes to exalt himself over everything. Here was this one city of the world of that time that exalted "self-sufficiency" over everything else. Tyre at this time had everything one could ever want in one's lifetime and got rich through trade. In that sense it is the "center of power" of everything that chooses to rule over God. Given that, this is the "perfect place" at this time in history to mention the "source" of all that exalt themselves above God.
3. This lesson is the first time in my Ezekiel studies (so far) that I'm only going to cover one chapter.
  - a) It is not that I consider Chapter 28 the most important in the book.
  - b) It is because the issue of "pride" is so common and is a major stumbling block for both believers and nonbelievers. The issue of pride requires a lot of commentary.
  - c) Further, the issue of "Satan" himself is prevalent in this chapter. It gives us a good opportunity to discuss just who Satan is, and what is his role. It is like the expression that goes, "Know thy enemy". If we are to oppose Satan, it is best to understand what his purpose is, what his power is, what his tactics are and what his motivations are for opposing us. We'll discuss some of these questions in this lesson.
  - d) With that long and "scary" opening completed, it is time to begin Verse 1. ☺

4. Chapter 28, Verse 1: The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas." But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.
  - a) Notice 28 begins a new vision by Ezekiel. The last two chapters were on the topic of the city of Tyre and were based on another vision Ezekiel had on the topic of Tyre.
  - b) It is as if God is saying, "Oh, and let me tell you a few more things about Tyre's leader".
  - c) In this vision, Ezekiel is to specifically speak to the ruler of Tyre. Some translations will say the "prince" of Tyre. Don't let that fool you. Even though the KJV (and other bible translations) will say "prince", it is definitely referring to the king of Tyre. Later in this chapter, Ezekiel is going to speak to the power behind this king and Ezekiel refers to that power (i.e. Satan) as the King of Tyre.
  - d) The first accusation against the actual king of Tyre is that God puts him down for thinking that he is a god. Tyre did have a religious temple to their local god and some people think the king of Tyre sat in the temple of that god. Whether or not this is true, what we do know is that this king thought of himself as a local god.
    - i) We know that some of the Greek rulers and Roman rulers also thought of themselves as gods and were worshipped as gods. My point here is that this type of "high flattery" was common in Middle East at this time.
  - e) It's time for my first application of the text. A problem with "pride" is that there is never any level of satisfaction. A person who desires power is never happy until they are an ultimate ruler (say a President or a king). Even if people hit that level and also have all the wealth they could ever imagine at their disposal it is not enough to satisfy that desire. The only step up from there is to be worshipped as some sort of god.
    - i) My point is not that Christians cannot run for any sort of office. The point is to keep that power in perspective. It is God who raises people up to leadership and we should acknowledge God for our accomplishments and not ourselves.
    - ii) We have to "keep in check" the human desire for more power. It is a desire that can never be satisfied. A related point is the devil knows we are never satisfied with any amount of power and can use that against us.
    - iii) I have watched many people in my lifetime deal with a "significant dose" of power testing issues. They go to big banquets and speaking engagements and watch lots of people cheer for them. I am convinced that desire to be liked (i.e., worshipped) is what drives a lot of people to seek power and fame.
    - iv) Again, I am not condemning any Christian that seeks to run for any office. The point is to keep in mind who is the "real power" and realize that our success comes from God and not from our own doing.
5. Verse 3: Are you wiser than Daniel? Is no secret hidden from you?
  - a) At the time of Ezekiel's writing, Daniel was now the second most powerful man in Babylon. Daniel was known for his wisdom. The king of Babylon recognized that Daniel was gifted in wisdom and raised Daniel to a point of great power. Apparently that fame about Daniel had spread around the Middle East and Ezekiel uses Daniel as an example of somebody with God given wisdom.
    - i) God is condemning the lack of wisdom of the King of Tyre just because He has amassed great wealth. That does not make him wise in God's eyes.
  - b) The point here is that Daniel was given a great gift and he recognized God as the source of that gift. Ezekiel is making a point about the king of Tyre in saying that king refuses to acknowledge the true God and does not have the insight of someone like Daniel.
  - c) Just because we acknowledge God, does not make us as "wise as Daniel". It is God who gives us "gifts" and we have to trust God regularly for any and all insight.

6. Verse 4: By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries. <sup>5</sup> By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud.
  - a) One can sense the sarcasm coming through the text.
  - b) The king of Tyre has led his city-state to amass all sorts of wealth. The problem is not the wealth itself. The problem is that the wealth caused the king to become "proud".
    - i) In other words, because this king of Tyre was so financially successful, the king started to give himself all the credit for the wealth that was created.
7. Verse 6: " `Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: " `Because you think you are wise, as wise as a god, <sup>7</sup> I am going to bring foreigners against you, the most ruthless of nations; they will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom and pierce your shining splendor.
  - a) In these verses, God is describing how the leader of Tyre will be brought down.
    - i) The joke is God is saying in effect to the king of Tyre: "Well, you think you are a god, tell that to the guy who is about to cut your throat!" ☺
  - b) Notice the specific crime of the king is that he thought he was as wise as a god. The lesson to you and I is when we reach a point of leadership or some great accomplishment, we give that credit to God and don't "pat ourselves on the back" for getting there.
  - c) I mentioned in the last lesson that the Babylonians had a reputation for being "very ruthless" in their conquering in that they go out of their way to hurt those they conquer. Let's just say that being killed by the Babylonians is not a way you want to die. Notice that is mentioned in Verse 7 as it says the Babylonians are "the most ruthless of nations".
8. Verse 8: They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die a violent death in the heart of the seas.
  - a) Verse 8 says the Babylonians "will bring you down to the pit". Make no mistake about it, this is a reference not only to death, but to hell itself. The idea is that not only has this king rejected the "God of the world", but has exalted himself as a god. The punishment is not only in this lifetime, but eternal.
  - b) There is an old Christian expression that goes: "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once". That is a reference to being born again and obtaining salvation. If we fail to give our lives to God, we die twice, in that once on earth and then we die "eternally" in hell.
    - i) That expression applies here as the prediction is that the king of Tyre will die a violent death at the hands of the Babylonians and then "die forever" in hell.
  - c) The text also refers to the "heart of the seas". The residents of Tyre thought that their city was special, due to their wealth. Because they were a sea-based town and were very wealthy from their trade, their home was thought of as special or "heart of the seas".
9. Verse 9: Will you then say, "I am a god," in the presence of those who kill you? You will be but a man, not a god, in the hands of those who slay you.
  - a) Here is another reference to the fact the leader of Tyre thought of himself as a god. The question God is asking is, "Will you say you are a god to the people who will kill you? Will the fact you proclaim yourself as a god be able to save your life?" The answer is no.
  - b) Remember that Ezekiel is speaking to a Jewish audience in Babylon. Some "traders" to Tyre may hear the message, but I'm sure the king died as predicted. My question is why proclaim this message here and now? Is it to benefit the king and get him to change? I doubt that, as the punishment is now set. The reason Ezekiel is giving this message is so others can learn not to exalt themselves to something they are not. It is a reminder for us to give God the credit for any and all success in our lives.
10. Verse 10: You will die the death of the uncircumcised at the hands of foreigners. I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.' "
  - a) This is the end of the discussion of the leader of Tyre. The reference to "uncircumcised" has nothing to do with the Jewish circumcision ritual. Tyre also practiced circumcision and the Babylonians did not. It is a reminder of how this king will die.

11. Verse 11: The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>12</sup> "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
- a) From Verses 11 to 19, we are going to discuss the power behind the king of Tyre.
  - b) Before I go any further, I should state that some bible commentators argue that this is not about Satan, because Satan's name (or any of the other title of Satan) is not mentioned in this text. There are scholars that argue this section still refers to a human leader in Tyre and some of the references to the "Garden of Eden" are a colorful exaggeration of how much the leader of Tyre has raised himself up.
    - i) Personally, I, along with a lot of other bible commentators do believe this is about Satan himself. Whether or not you agree with my interpretation of who is this character, the application is still the same: It is about the danger of thinking too highly of oneself and not giving God the credit for the victories in our lives.
  - c) I should add another comment here: If we give God the credit when we are raised up to a position of power, does that mean God is to be blamed if we are not raised up? No.
    - i) It simply means God does not want us to have that position at that time.
    - ii) There is another old expression that goes, "The dice of the gods are loaded"! It is like playing "craps" with dice that are fixed. What that expression means is that what we think are random events is God controlling things behind the scenes.
    - iii) My point is we should not blame God when things don't turn as we planned. It may simply be God's will that we don't have that position of power at this time. It may be God's will for us to go through some trial and learn from that event.
    - iv) At the same time, the bible does clearly teach us to pray for those in power (See Romans 13:1) so that we can live a fruitful life for God. On a related note, if a good Christian person is raised to a position of authority, we should pray for them. It comes down to giving God the credit for the victories in our lives and at the same time, when we "lose" a particular contest, it is not God's fault, but it is simply not God's will for us to win that event at that time.
    - v) Meanwhile, the last time I looked up, we are on verse 11. ☺
  - d) Notice Verse 11 is the beginning of a new vision. The last vision, which started in Verse 1 was about the leader of Tyre, called the "prince" of Tyre in the King James Version.
    - i) Here in Verse 11, God, through Ezekiel starts up a new vision about the "king" of Tyre. All the text says so far about this king is he was, "the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty".
      - a) The next thing I want you to notice is the "past tense" description of this guy. The text says he was the model of perfection, etc.
      - b) Let me add move on to the next verse, and then let's spend a little time describing who Satan was originally and "what happened".
12. Verse 13: You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.
- a) Whoever this "king of Tyre" was, Verse 13 says he was in the Garden of Eden. If I recall my bible correctly, the only "entities" in the Garden of Eden were Adam, Eve, God and Satan himself, who manifested himself through a snake. Therefore, this "king" is Satan.
  - b) Let's talk for a second about what Satan "did" look like:
    - i) He was "the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." (Verse 12).
    - ii) Verse 13 lists nine types of gems (precious stones) that covered him. I don't think Satan was covered from head to toe with these gems. I suspect it was some sort of collected piece of jewelry to show his rank and authority. The same way a general has stars on his uniform to show his rank, I suspect Satan had these nine gems to show his rank.

- iii) The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has a reference to some musical instruments instead of the term "settings and mountings". If the KJV is right, the idea is that of Satan had the gifts to play music before God. I'm not saying music is a bad thing. Music itself is "neutral" and can be used for good or bad.
- c) Next, notice that Satan was created. There is a false view that Satan is equal with Jesus and they each represent the opposite ends of power.
  - i) Remember that Jesus is God in that Jesus always existed. Jesus manifested himself in human form roughly 2,000 years ago, but Jesus always existed.
  - ii) Jesus is the instrument by which God (Himself) created all things. John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 teach that Jesus made all things. That means Satan was created and Jesus was the one who created Satan.
  - iii) So why would Jesus want to create Satan? Was that a mistake? The answer is that Satan was not created to oppose God. We'll get to that in two verses.
  - iv) The other great question is since Satan is so powerful and opposes God, why does God allow him to live and do damage? The answer is to keep us close to God. Since Satan is so powerful, our only defense is to call on Jesus for our protection. It comes down to the bible line that says, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1st John 4:4b, NKJV). The idea of that statement is that God, living inside of us, is more powerful than Satan or anything Satan can throw at us.
- 13. Verse 14: You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.
  - a) It's time to discuss angelic creatures. The word "angels" is used to describe any sort of heavenly based creature that is not human or God himself. God created a whole bunch of creatures that we call "angels".
    - i) There are clues in the bible that angels exist in "ranks". In other words, some angels outrank others. A good example on this point is in Daniel Chapter 10. In that chapter, the angel Gabriel gives Daniel a message. Gabriel explains that he was delayed in giving that message to Daniel because Gabriel was battling the "prince of the Persian kingdom". What is being implied is that Gabriel was delayed as he was battling the demonic leader behind the Persian kingdom.
    - ii) My point is that just as good angels appear to be in ranks, so demonic angels are in ranks. The leader of the good angels is God. The leader of the demonic angels is Satan himself. Therefore, when we are fighting demonic forces, it is probably some low ranking demonic angel, whose boss is another demonic angel, whose boss is another demonic angel and eventually that works its way up to Satan.
      - a) Along the same line of thinking, if good angels are helping us, their bosses' bosses' boss (keep going) is God himself.
  - b) OK John this is all very interesting. What does any of this have to do with Verse 14?
    - i) The answer is that Satan was "anointed as a guardian cherub". This takes us back to Chapter 1 of the book of Ezekiel. If you recall way back to my first lesson on Ezekiel, he had a strange vision of four special angelic creatures with wings and feet and they moved together as united team. These types of angels are called "cherub's" in the bible and the proper plural term is "cherubim".
    - ii) Apparently, Satan was at one time, the leader of these cherubim. He was, as the text says here in Verse 14: "anointed as a guardian cherub".
    - iii) This gets back to the issue of angels and "ranks". That means that Satan was the leader of the cherub's which means he was God's "top angel". God originally created Satan to be the top angel and the leader of that group.
  - c) Now let me finish Verse 14: The second sentence said that this "King of Tyre" which I will argue is Satan himself was "on the holy mount of God". The "mount" has nothing to do with where Tyre was located. The reference is to where God resides in heaven.

- i) If heaven is a big place, the center of heaven is where God's throne is located. The point is if Satan was the "top angel", he resided where God was located.
  - d) The last phrase says that Satan "walked among the fiery stones". Commentators debate that phrase, but it probably has something to do with the location of God's throne room.
  - e) The point of the text so far is even though Satan spends all of human history opposing God that was not why Satan was created in the first place. We're going to discuss the fall of Satan and why all this happened beginning with the next verse:
- 14. Verse 15: You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.
  - a) In this verse, it is stated that Satan was "blameless when he was created" until the day that "wickedness was found in you". The great question is when did this happen?
    - i) We're not sure, but at the latest, it was when Satan tempted Eve to eat of the fruit.
    - ii) Scholars debate over why Satan choose to rebel. The most likely answer is the fact that Satan didn't like the fact he had to praise God all the time and wanted some of that praise for himself.
    - iii) Notice that Satan had free will. Apparently all angels have free will. I say that as the bible teaches that a third of the angels choose to rebel with Satan. (See Revelation 12:4 on this point, where the word "stars" refers to angels.)
    - iv) Did Satan deny that God was in charge? I don't think so. It's just that either Satan did not believe man was worth saving or Satan wanted praise for himself for his role as the leader among the angels.
    - v) The reason Satan lead Eve to sin was after Satan choose to rebel, he set out to stop God's plan for man's redemption to happen. One can read through the whole bible with a sense of a demonic force in the background constantly challenging God's will of the "story character of the moment".
  - b) Did God know Satan was going to turn and rebel? I believe God knows all things. Since God knew this, why did God create Satan in the first place? It gets back to the concept of having us humans trust in God. If there is a powerful force trying to get us to do the wrong thing, our only hope is to turn to God for protection from that powerful force. God knew Satan would rebel and still that was part of God's "eternal plan".
  - c) I want to say one more thing about the Garden of Eden story before I move on:
    - i) After Adam and Eve ate the bad fruit, God dished out the punishments. Genesis Chapter 3, Verses 14-15 is where God dishes out the punishment to the snake.
      - a) One has to read those 2 verses in Genesis as both the punishment of the snake (or serpent) and the punishment of Satan himself. Verse 14 is the punishment of the snake itself. After the punishment the snake had to crawl on the ground. How a snake moved around prior to that stated punishment is unknown. Maybe it had arms and legs at one time!
      - b) Verse 15 focuses on the punishment to Satan himself. My point is just here in Ezekiel 28, God first dishes out the punishment to the "prince" of Tyre, who was the ruler of that city and then God dishes out the punishment to the power behind that ruler who is Satan. We have that same pattern in Genesis Chapter 3, where the immediate punishment is on the snake and the long term punishment is on the power behind that snake.
  - d) Let's stand back for a moment and remember why God is going to all of this trouble of describing why Satan existed and how it relates to the actual king of Tyre.
    - i) In the first half of this chapter, we read how the king of Tyre had so much self-pride, he thought of himself as a god. In Verses 11-19, we are reading of the spiritual (demonic) power behind the leader of Tyre.
    - ii) The reason we're giving all of these details about Satan is so that we can understand not only his power, but his methods of attacking you and me!

- iii) One of Satan's most powerful weapons is pride. One way Satan can get even a good Christian to turn away from God's will for our life is to appeal to our pride. Satan can say to us, "Give yourself some credit for the good things happening!"
    - iv) A classical biblical example of pride is when Peter turned to Jesus and said in effect, "No, this will never happen to you" (A paraphrase of Matthew 16:22). Jesus responded by saying "Get behind me Satan" in Matthew 16:23. Jesus point is that Satan was behind that statement by Peter, because it was God the Father's will for Jesus to be crucified for our sins even though Peter didn't get it at that time.
  - e) It's time for some commentary on how Satan can influence us. There is a big difference between being "demon possessed" versus just being "influenced" by a demonic being.
    - i) To be "demon possessed" is when a demonic creature actual takes over the thoughts and actions of a human on a full-time basis. It happened in biblical times on a pretty regular basis as Jesus cast demons out of people. It does exist today, but I'll argue it happens less often in places like the United States only because people pray too much around here. Still it exists and I've heard some pretty amazing testimonies by many Christians I respect on this topic.
      - a) For those who have seen the movie "The Exorcist", the original story was based on a number of actual demon possessions. The movie exaggerated the powers of those possessed and in real life, the demons lost.
    - ii) Which leads back to my point: Satan and his army can influence believers to say or do the wrong thing. That is very different from being "demon possessed". I am convinced that once the Spirit of God takes up residence in a person, we can't be possessed by both God and Satan. We still can (and do) the wrong things as even when God takes up residence in us, we still have the free will to do what we want.
  - f) If I were to summarize the last two pages in one or two thoughts it is that one of Satan's most powerful weapons is to appeal to our pride. That was the downfall of the king of the city of Tyre. That can cause the downfall of many a person to turn from God. It can also cause good Christians to be a bad witness for God at any given moment by turning our thoughts from God's will for our lives to our own will.
  - g) Meanwhile, I believe we are still studying Ezekiel, Chapter 28. ☺
15. Verse 16: Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.
- a) Before I started this whole long discussion of Satan, I stated that there are bible commentators who argue that this whole section is only an "allusion" to Satan and it is really only about the king of Tyre. I state that here because Verse 16 has references to "widespread trade" and "filled with violence". One can read this verse as either being about the king in charge of Tyre or the demonic force behind that king.
  - b) No matter which view of this text is correct, the "end result" is the same.
    - i) There really are dark demonic forces trying to get us to be a bad witness for God. Just as we have the free will to accept or reject God's will at any moment of our life, so we have the free will to reject Satan at any moment.
    - ii) My point is if you believe this section of Ezekiel is only talking about the (literal) king of Tyre or if you believe the text is talking about Satan himself, the sin God is focusing on is still the same. It is about taking pride in one's accomplishments to a point where one is congratulating themselves and not God for their victories.
  - c) Which leads us back to Verse 16: These two verses have more of a "human feel" than a spiritual feel. In other words, it reads like it is describing something human (not in the godly sense, but in the "humanistic" sense) as opposed to a demonic deity.
    - i) That is because this verse says it is because of the wealth you have amassed, it caused you to be violent and sinned.



- ii) If it is talking about a specific human like say a king, that verse makes sense.
  - iii) If the verse is talking about Satan, how does "widespread trade" cause him to be filled with violence and sin? I don't have a good answer for that question.
  - iv) The more I study this passage the more I see the "double reference". In other words, part of the text is alluding to Satan himself, but part of the passage is dealing with the king of Tyre and in the indirect sense, anybody who focuses on wealth to the point where it dominates their life and their way of thinking.
  - v) The double reference is also about the fact that the spiritual forces behind the king of Tyre is what drove the king away from what is really important and started to focus on wealth and power as an end to itself.
  - vi) This would be a good time to comment again on wealth itself. Paul said the love of money is the root of all evil, not the existence of money itself. (See 1st Timothy 6:10). Money can be used for good or for bad purposes. The danger is when we make it a priority over God. That is the "pride" factor.
  - d) The second sentence in this verse is more about the demonic force behind the king. The text says that because of the sin of Satan, he was driven from God's presence.
16. Verse 17: Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.
- a) Here is another verse where one questions whether this is talking about the spiritual entity behind the king of Tyre, or the human king. I say that because the end of this verse describes how this "entity" was thrown down and made a spectacle before kings.
    - i) If it is talking just about the king of Tyre, it would be describing his downfall and how the king who attacked Tyre's king saw his downfall. Remember that in this era of time, kings lead the army in attack.
    - ii) If it is talking about Satan himself, then it is describing the "end times" when people see his ultimate destruction when Jesus puts him forever in the "fiery pit of hell", whatever and wherever that actually is. (Reference Revelation 20:10).
  - b) Let's get back to the question of what caused Satan to rebel against God and how that affects us. The bible never says why Satan rebelled. Satan still believed God was "God". I think the issue is about the fact Satan didn't like that all praise in heaven was focused on God alone and Satan didn't get any praise or credit as the "leader of the angels".
    - i) That leads us back to the topic of pride. Our goal as Christians should be to give God all the glory in our lives. Our job is to magnify the name of Jesus and Jesus' alone in our life. When we want some of the credit for ourselves for our accomplishments, no matter how "good" they are, that is when our pride kicks in and for that moment in time, we too, become like Satan and share that sin.
    - ii) This is why "pride" is such a bad thing. It starts us on a life of turning from God to do our will and to give ourselves the credit for what happens in our life.
    - iii) This leads us back to Satan: Since he couldn't have any praise, he decided to organize a rebellion against God's plan of salvation for mankind. I don't know his motivation. Maybe he thought that "mankind" isn't worth the trouble. Whatever it is, his goal is still to get our focus onto ourselves in either good or bad things.
  - c) Believe it or not, that little speech about Satan ties very well with Verse 17. The text says that he was thrown to earth because of his pride and the fact his beauty was corrupted.
 

With that pleasant thought out of my system, I can go back to the text. ☺
17. Verse 18: By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.
- a) Here is another verse where one can debate whether or not it is talking about the king of Tyre or the spiritual force behind the king. One can read it either way.

- b) Let me "read it" from the view it is talking about Tyre's king: The text is saying God brought this king down to his death because of his dishonest trade. In the earlier lessons of Ezekiel, I would talk about the issue of "it is more merciful to kill a badly injured horse than to let it live". Along the same lines, a human being can become so corrupt in his or her lifestyle it is more merciful for God to end that life than let it go on.
    - i) That is the flavor of the corruption we are reading in this text.
  - c) If I read this verse as the death of Satan, it is a visual picture of his ultimate end.
    - i) I'm not sure Verse 18 applies well to Satan in that "his end" as described in Revelation is different than "his end" as described in this verse. In Revelation, Satan's end is by being thrown into a "lake of fire" that somehow burns forever. Wherever this lake is, I don't want to be in it or near it! ☺
    - ii) In Verse 18, it describes Satan, it is saying that fire comes out of him and he is reduced to ashes. It could be describing Satan's ultimate end. In Revelation it is describing Satan's end from God's perspective and Ezekiel could be describing it from Satan's perspective. I want to leave that as a possibility to consider.
  - d) Whether it is talking about the death of a bad king, or Satan himself, in the end does not matter in the sense of how this verse applies to us: What is to be learned is about the danger of living for "things" instead of God. Such things can include money and wealth and power, but it can also be as subtle as desiring "pats on the back" for our own contribution as opposed to giving God all of the glory.
18. Verse 19: All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.' "
- a) Here is the final verse in this section. Again, it could be written about the actual king of Tyre, or the spiritual force (Satan) that is behind the king.
  - b) From the perspective of the king of Tyre, the text can be describing the end of his power and the fact that all the people who got rich off of Tyre, have come to an end.
  - c) From the perspective of Satan, it can be describing all of the millions and billions of people who have come under his influence and to put it mildly, they all have been brought to a horrible end.
  - d) This is a good time to remind Christians that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. That alone is worth a good amen right here! Yes, we can lose our witness or be a less effective witness for God by having too much pride but we are still saved. That fact for the believer is another reminder to be on the guard of the issue of pride.
  - e) Well, it would be appropriate to end the chapter here, but there are still six more verses on two different topics. Let's read on and find out what they are about. ☺
19. Verse 20: The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>21</sup> "Son of man, set your face against Sidon; prophesy against her <sup>22</sup> and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I am against you, O Sidon, and I will gain glory within you. They will know that I am the LORD, when I inflict punishment on her and show myself holy within her. <sup>23</sup> I will send a plague upon her and make blood flow in her streets. The slain will fall within her, with the sword against her on every side. Then they will know that I am the LORD.
- a) In Verses 20 to 24, Ezekiel changes topics. We now have a new vision about a new place.
  - b) The topic of these verses is the city of Sidon.
    - i) Back when I started this section of Ezekiel in Chapter 25, the big topic is all about the condemnation of the nations surrounding Israel. I mentioned then that there were seven specific groups that were condemned in Chapters 25 through 32. We had four groups mentioned in Chapter 25. We had Tyre discussed from Chapter 26 until now and we have Egypt in Chapters 29 through 32. That adds up to six.
      - a) The seventh of this group is the city of Sidon.
  - c) The interesting thing about this text is how generic it is. You could read this text about the destruction of just about any fallen city or empire.

- i) There is nothing mentioned about any sin committed by Sidon.
    - ii) It mainly says this city will fall by a plague and a sword. The idea of the sword is that Babylon will conquer this city. I suspect a plague comes with the attack and some disease helps bring down this city.
  - d) So unto the big question: Why was Sidon condemned and why is it mentioned here?
    - i) The easy answer is to say, "God likes to work in multiples of seven in issues of judgment (e.g., seven churches judged in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3).
    - ii) The hard part about this text is one cannot find any specific sin listed. Even if one does a cross-check of other mentions of Sidon in the bible, it is hard to find a specific sin that it is more or less guilty of than other nations.
    - iii) So what do I think this is about? It comes back to God keeping His promises.
      - a) He promised that Israel would live in peace once the enemies of Israel were wiped out once and for all. We've discussed every surrounding nation to Israel so far except Sidon and Egypt.
      - b) The next set of verses is about the promise to the nation of Israel one day living in peace from its surrounding enemies. Since all of the surrounding entities were discussed except Sidon, it is important Sidon is discussed.
      - c) As I mentioned in the introduction, Sidon was a Phoenician city like Tyre. At this time in history, Sidon was a second rate city in comparison to Tyre.
      - d) Since the next set of verses coming up is about God keeping His promise to Israel, I think the whole purpose of describing the fall of Sidon is for God to say in effect He will take care of all of our enemies so we can one day live in peace and worship Him.
  - e) Getting back to the text itself, the only clue of Sidon's sin goes back to the sins listed of the other nations surrounding Israel: These places should have known that the "God of Israel" is the true God simply by their close proximity and interaction with Israel.
    - i) In other words, even though God had for the time being wiped out the nation of Israel, God still has to prove to the surrounding world that He is God.
    - ii) The way I look at passages like this, is to remind myself that people will be judged one day based on what information they did have about God. Places like Sidon were in close enough proximity that they should have inquired more about God and asked what God requires of them.
      - a) This is also "more scary" today in that people have access to the internet, radio and television. There is no excuse for anyone with access to this information to find out what God requires of our lives.
    - iii) The final line says that "then they will know that I am the Lord". If you recall from the last lesson, this line is used after some of the other nations were judged in Chapter 25. I believe it is an "end time" reference when God makes it obvious on "judgment day" for these nations that He was behind these judgments.
  - f) Which leads us to the next verse of this chapter:
20. Verse 24: "No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briers and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.
- a) This verse is a great bridge between the last set of verses about Sidon and the next set of verses which is about God's eternal promises to "His people".
  - b) This verse is saying that the Israelites will know that "God is God" based on all of their neighbors who have been "pains in their sides" on and off for centuries are now gone.
    - i) Remember that the reason Israel was taken into captivity is that collectively they turned to other gods. This verse is a reminder again that God will make it obvious to Israel that He, and He alone is in charge.
    - ii) Also remember that the majority of Israelites have by now died due the Babylonian invasion and the survivors were taken to Babylon.

- iii) These verses to the Nation of Israel is a reminder that even though all of these other nations will be "gone for good", God still cares about the Israelite nation and will bring them back from captivity.
  - iv) This leads us to the text of the last two verses:
- 21. Verse 25: " `This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. <sup>26</sup> They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.' "
- a) These verses have a "double reference": One can read these verses as to the fact that Israel was gathered as a nation seventy years after they went into captivity and that would be a sign to the Jewish nation and the surrounding nation that the God of Israel is God!
  - b) The other idea behind these verses is that of "end time" view. A promise to the nation of Israel is that the Messiah (Jesus) would rule the world one day from Jerusalem and Israel would have peace from the nations surrounding them. The modern state of Israel is a partial fulfillment in that the Jewish people do control the land again, but the prophecy is not fulfilled in that modern Israel has never had peace from its surrounding neighbors.
  - c) I believe this "double prophecy" is designed to be a little vague on purpose. It is designed so that when the Israelites did return after seventy years, they could say they had peace even though they were never an independent state until 1948. This prophecy was only partially fulfilled when the Israelites did come back from the Babylonian captivity, but it will not be fully realized until the Messiah rules the world from Jerusalem.
  - d) This reminds me of another point. If you ever have wondered why the Jewish people of Jesus' day collectively rejected Him as the Messiah, is because they were expecting the Messiah to overthrow the Roman government and rule the world from Jerusalem. When they saw Jesus after he was beaten by Roman soldiers is when they lost confidence in Him to overthrow the Roman government and (for that time) rejected Him as their Messiah.
    - i) The Jews wanted a ruling Messiah and not one who had to suffer for the sake of their sins. It did not sink in that the Old Testament has a "double role" of the Messiah: One to suffer for sins and one to rule the world!
  - e) One thing that puzzled me about this text is "why place it here?" Ezekiel has only described six of the seven nations that are to be judged. We still have a four chapter section left to go, and that whole section has to do with Egypt.
    - i) Why didn't God (through Ezekiel) wait until after describing the punishment on Egypt before making this proclamation that Israel will live in peace and the enemies surrounding Israel would be destroyed?
    - ii) I don't have an answer, but that won't stop me from speculating. ☺ The fate of the six nations mentioned so far is that they will all eventually die out. None of these six nation-states exist today. We will read in the next few chapters that Egypt will survive, but as a lowly nation.
      - a) It would only be a "cute coincidence" if Ezekiel correctly predicted about all seven nations dying out. Some people would say that is a coincidence and doubt this was the word of God. On the other hand, if the bible predicted the end of six of the seven groups and correctly named the seventh one to survive long after that, it would be an impressive sign that the bible does record human history written in advance!
    - iii) Even with that answer, it still doesn't explain why the positive fate of Israel is explained prior to a long discussion about Egypt. Maybe it has to do with the fate of the six that "died" and the fact God has long term plans for Egypt!

- iv) The other possibility is that God didn't want his Jewish audience to "fall asleep" with all of this talk about other nations. Ezekiel gives a two verse "pep talk" here to remind the Israelites that God is still caring about them despite the fall of the other nations around them and despite the fact that the Jewish nation has gone into captivity at this time.
  - f) Let me get back to the text itself. It is saying that the Jewish nation will thrive again one day and not have to worry about it's enemies. The text does not say "when". It just says that it will happen one day. For a Jewish audience (Ezekiel was preaching to) that has lost everything and for a nation that has been conquered by the Babylonians, it must have been a good thing to hear!
22. OK, time to wrap it up.
- a) Most of this chapter focused on the issue of pride. Each of us probably can give examples where we deal with the issue of pride. Let me give a personal example of pride:
    - i) I can use these bible studies as my own example. The danger is to focus on the big list of people who read these lessons. I can give myself the credit for its success. What I should do is give God the credit as He is drawing more people to learn about Him and not about me. All the credit should go to God and none to myself.
23. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, help us to deal with issues of pride in our own lives. Help us to be aware of when those issues are present and give You all the glory and none to our self. Thank You for calling us to salvation, and thank You for forgiving us of all of sins, including the ones we are, and are not aware of at any given time. We thank You in Jesus name, Amen.