

He Comes to Judge the Earth

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[0 : 00] And we are working through Ezekiel at the moment, and we're in Ezekiel chapter 25 through to 28 this morning. So please turn there in your Bibles, and we are not going to read all of these chapters, but I'm going to walk us through something of a summary of these chapters.

So you can follow with me, and I'll make sure I'm referring to which bits of these chapters I'm referring to. But we're going to begin in Ezekiel 25 and verse 1.

The word of the Lord came to me. Son of man, set your face towards the Ammonites and prophesy against them.

Say to the Ammonites, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God, because you said, Aha! over my sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the house of Judah when they went into exile, therefore behold, I am handing you over to the people of the east for a possession.

And they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings in your midst. They shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. I will make Rabba a pasture for camels, and Ammon a flock for flocks.

[1 : 32] Then you will know that I am the Lord. For thus says the Lord God, Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within your soul against the land of Israel, therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you, and will hand you over as plundered to the nations.

And I will cut you off from the peoples, and will make you perish out of the countries. I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

Then you have three similar oracles against the other nations around Judah's borders. They complete the chapter, Moab, Edom, and Philistia, whose never-ending enmity, verse 15, epitomizes their hostility against God and his people.

The fifth oracle is against Tyre, the most prosperous trading city of the region, and that takes up almost all of chapters 26, 27, and 28.

And the charge begins with the same issue, namely, their ruthlessly exploiting of Judah's downfall. Look at 26, verse 2. Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, Aha, the gates of the peoples is broken.

[2 : 53] It has swung open to me. I shall be replenished now that she has laid waste. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you as the sea brings up its waves.

They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers. And I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock. And it will be a calamitous and lasting judgment.

Look how the chapter ends, verse 20. I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old.

And I will make you dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old. And those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited. But I will set beauty in the land of the living.

I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more. Though you be sought for, you will never be found again, declares the Lord God.

[3 : 59] And chapter 27 records the lament for Tyre. A place once perfect in beauty, verse 4. Bustling with trade and filled with great wealth of every kind, verse 14.

But now, it's destroyed. Tyre is pictured like a great sailing ship. Look at verse 25. Heavily laden in the heart of the seas.

But now, verse 27. Sunk into the heart of the seas. Verse 32. Destroyed in the midst of the sea. And verse 36.

You have come to a dreadful end. And then chapter 28 focuses on the king of Tyre. Who personifies the whole nature and spirit of Tyre in all its beauty and grandeur. And in its nemesis, pride. And so God says to him, 28 verse 5. By your great wisdom in your trade, you have increased your wealth.

[5 : 08] And your heart has become proud in your wealth. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, because you make your heart like the heart of a God, therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations.

And they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor. They shall thrust you down into the pit.

And the lament from verse 11 likens this king's fall to the first fall of man. Look at verse 13. You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Verse 14. Guardian on God's holy mountain. Blame this in your ways. But, verse 16. You sinned. And so God cast him out from the mountain of God. And the heart of that original sin? Well, it's pride.

[6 : 11] Verse 17. You were proud because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. Do read through all of 28 during the offering time.

And you'll see at verse 20 another oracle of judgment against Sidon, Tyre's neighbor, to complete the picture of judgment of all these nations full of contempt for God and his people.

All of these, says verse 22, shall know that I am the Lord. But only, it seems, when the Lord executes judgments upon them.

But this awful litany of judgment comes to an end with a ray of hope. Despite all that Ezekiel has prophesied about God's imminent judgment on his own people, look at those words in verse 24 to 26.

And for the house of Israel, there shall be no more a briar to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt.

[7 : 22] Then they will know that I am the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God, When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered and manifest my holiness in them in the sight of all the nations, then they shall dwell in their own land that I gave to my servant Jacob.

And they shall dwell securely in it. And they shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell securely when I execute judgments upon their neighbors who have treated them with contempt.

Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God. Well, may God bless his word to us this morning. We've covered a lot of ground. And during the offering, I do recommend trying to skate your eyes over those chapters again. We'll do turn with me to Ezekiel and these chapters 25 to 28.

Now, some Christians seem to think that there's no place at all for the church to criticize the world outside.

[8 : 39] I think that perhaps makes Christians seem superior in some way. And of course, that is always a danger. But God is not nearly so squeamish. This whole world is his.

And the scriptures remind us repeatedly of that. And that he will judge this whole world with justice and with righteousness.

And that means that this whole world needs to hear about that judgment and needs to fear that judgment. And so it's been rightly said that every prophet of God who has a word has it not only for God's people, but for God's whole world.

And Ezekiel, of course, was well aware of that. His repeated refrain is that the nations will know that the Lord is the true God. And that's underlined very pointedly in these chapters 25 to 32, where we come to a new section of the book.

And they're all oracles against the nations given at around the time of the siege on Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. If you still have our general outline of the book, you'll recall that the first three chapters give a revelation of God's glory to Ezekiel, to God's prophet as God's watchman.

[9 : 59] Then, as we've been seeing in chapters 4 to 24, God proclaims a powerful message to his people, saying that he's going to remove his glory from his land, from his people, even from his own house, his own temple.

Such was Judah's rebellion and evil. It was unthinkable to them, but it was true. And Ezekiel's words of judgment and of doom, the kind of things that are normally aimed at the enemies of God's people are aimed squarely at God's people themselves.

Judah, they have become the enemy of God. But in all of this, God's glory will be vindicated in his world. And in the sight of the whole world, the nations will see that he is the Lord.

And God's glory will return. And they will see his glory revealed to all the nations. Chapter 39, verse 21 says that.

He will set his glory among the nations. And that's the message of the rest of Ezekiel, from chapter 25 to the end. But he will restore his glory both in judgment on all evil in all nations, and through the restoration and renewal of his true kingdom and people.

[11 : 27] And that will only be through the extraordinary nature of his covenant mercy and his grace. So the world will see, as God's own people will see, that the judgment on all the earth is just.

He will punish sin. He will punish evil. And yet, amid that, the world will see that there is, nevertheless, a mercy that triumphs even over judgment.

And here, in chapters 25 to 32, we see that justice of God. In the midst of all his judgment on his own people, on Jerusalem, these oracles of judgment are firmly spoken against all the nations. And, of course, there's a clear message for God's people in all of that. And it's this. Don't look to the world for salvation and for hope in the midst of your own demise and your own decline.

There's absolutely no hope there. Israel constantly looked to the powers, to the influences of their day for help instead of turning back to God.

[12 : 34] And they would never seem to learn. And, you know, that is so often the case still today, isn't it? Where the church, amid its own decline and demise, just wants to imbibe more and more and more of the ways of the world.

But there's no hope there because this is a world under judgment. Now, God is sovereign over all the world.

He's the author of both blessings and curse. And the only way of hope is to face that reality and is to turn penitently back to the ways of his kingdom, back to the truth of his word.

And that was Ezekiel's message then to his people. It's still the message in our day today. Love not the world, says the Apostle John. This whole world lies in the power of the evil one, he says.

This whole world is passing away with all of its desires. But it's whoever does the will of God who abides forever.

[13 : 37] Well, this week and next week, we have to grapple with this section. It's quite long. Eight chapters gives judgment on seven nations. That represents the whole world of that day.

First half, chapters 25 to 28, they deal with these six nations that we've read about. The whole of the second half, we'll look at next week, deals with Egypt. But the overwhelming message is very, very clear.

He, the Lord, comes to judge the whole earth. As chapter 39, verse 21 puts it, the nations shall see my judgment.

Now, we can't look in all the detail here, but I want to try and summarize the key message of each of these sections. First of all, look at verse, look at chapter 25. The message here is very plain.

God will punish aggression and violence towards His people. These oracles of judgment are against the four nations that directly surrounded Judah.

[14 : 40] There's Ammon to the northeast. That's modern-day Jordan. Moab, just to the south of that. Edom, to the south of them. And then the Philistines around the west. The coastal plain, Gaza, and that area today.

Today, including the islands in verse 16. Cheret is Crete. Now, these were all, together with Judah, part of a political pact against the Babylonian Empire.

But what happened was that when Judah was invaded by the Babylonians, all of them abandoned her. And they exploited that situation ruthlessly. Just the sort of thing that we see today in all the international maneuverings.

Nations very quickly reposition themselves, don't they, when they can see who the perceived winners are and where the profit's going to be. That's why these international sanctions hardly ever work, do they?

Because there's always profit for somebody. But God sees and God knows and God will judge evil. Verse 3, Ammon.

[15 : 47] Gloated maliciously over Jerusalem's horror when God's temple was profaned. Verse 6, clapping, dancing with all malice against the land of Israel.

Well, that's very familiar still, isn't it? In the kind of sickening jubilation that we so often see now. Crowds celebrating horrific terror atrocities, although these were good things.

Moab, likewise. Judah took Judah's demise as evidence that they were just no different from any other nation. Verse 8. In other words, they have no real God to help her. There's no notion of a unique God and a true faith.

Edom, verse 12, acted with vicious vengeance, likewise against Judah and her calamity. If you read Obadiah's little prophecy, you read there the detail of how the Edomites, how the descendants of Esau, remember, who despised God's covenant, how they preyed on those who were being taken into captivity.

They looted them. They murdered the stragglers. That's why in Psalm 137, you have a great lament and a curse against the Edomites. Then verse 15, the Philistines, they also leapt to the chance to do harm and were told they had a never-ending enmity.

[17:10] Notice the word, enmity, against the seed of promise. They were just showing that they truly belonged ultimately to the seed of the serpent, going right back to the very beginning.

And you can't but think, can you, that there's still so much evidence of that never-ending enmity that we see even today.

And so, says the Lord, verse 17, I will execute great vengeance on those who acted in vengeance on my people.

Verse 16, there is a pun. I will cut off. I will keret the keretites, representing all the Philistines. He will exact just retribution.

Vengeance for vengeance. And the point's very clear, isn't it, in all of these. God alone is sovereign over all the nations. And yes, He is just.

[18:09] He will discipline. He will punish severely His own people. We've seen plenty of that throughout Ezekiel so far. He'll punish them when instead of bringing honor to His name, they dishonor His name, blaspheme His name among the nations.

Ezekiel's been relentlessly clear on that. But, even when His people are under judgment, He will not tolerate those who hate them, who show gleeful aggression and violence against them.

Because God's covenant is inviolable. And those who bless Abraham and his seed, God will bless, He says.

But those who curse Abraham and his seed will be cursed. Now, we need to be careful here because we have to remember, the Apostle Paul tells us in the New Testament that it's those of faith who are the true seed of Abraham, both Jew and Gentile, those who share the faith of Abraham.

Paul's very clear about that, isn't he? In Romans chapter 4, just as he is in Galatians 3, verse 28. If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed. You are heirs according to the promise.

[19:28] And therefore, those who curse these, those who curse God's promise, will be cursed by God. And yet, here in Ezekiel, it's even when God's people Israel have become His enemies, breaking His covenant so as to deserve judgment, it's even then that still, He won't tolerate aggression and violence towards them, but He will punish it because in some way, that is still an attack on God's own name and God's honor.

And Paul does speak of that, doesn't he, somewhat mysteriously in Romans chapter 11 about the Jews of his day. He says they've become enemies of God on account of the gospel.

And yet, still in some way, he says, they're beloved for the sake of their forefathers. And there's a great mystery here. Paul himself says that God's judgments are unsearchable, that his ways are inscrutable.

But it does seem to be a principle of Scripture that even in the state of becoming God's enemy, in some way, in some way, the very existence of the Jews still bears witness to the name and the honor of God.

And that does seem to be the real explanation for the sheer and vitriolic hatred of anti-Semitism, which has been a never-ending enmity throughout human history right to this day.

[21:07] Something quite separate and something that goes far beyond anything to do with the actions of the modern state of Israel, which is an entirely secular entity. We must never be confused about that and never confuse the modern state of Israel with the covenant people of God, the Israel of God.

That is very clearly what the Bible means about God's redeemed people, all his redeemed people, Jew and Gentile. But nevertheless, there is a never-ending enmity, isn't there?

But whatever we may think of that particular issue, let's be very, very clear about the central truth that is proclaimed here, and that is that God will judge the world. He will judge all nations for the way that they treat His beloved people.

Even the very least, even the most vulnerable of these my brothers. It's how Jesus Himself puts it, isn't it, in His very clear words in Matthew chapter 25, where He's talking about the eternal division between the sheep and the goats, between those who are blessed of my Father and those who are cursed.

Do you know those words in Matthew 25 are some of the most abused in the New Testament, particularly within the church? So let us be very clear. What Jesus is talking about in that chapter is absolutely not to castigate Christians for their lack of care and concern for the poor of this world.

[22 : 37] So many liberal churchmen want to make that point. It is the very opposite that Jesus is saying. He is saying He will condemn the people of this world who have not shown love and welcome to Christian believers.

My brothers. In scorning and rejecting these my brothers, says the Lord Jesus, you have scorned and rejected me. And that is exactly the same message that we're seeing all the way through here in Ezekiel chapter 25.

Your hatred of these people who bear my name just shows your scorn and your hatred of me. And so you will be judged.

You will depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels to whom you have shown that you truly belong.

There's a real warning here in Ezekiel where it's just as there is that same real warning in Jesus' own words. You see, the world may look at the Christian church today, may look at it with scorn, especially in our part of the world where it does seem to be in such decline, where perhaps it is indeed under God's hand of judgment.

[23 : 53] And the world may look and scorn, but God says, do not gloat. Do not gloat. Don't scorn me by doing that because I will judge you also. I will judge all the earth.

And truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me. It's a word of great warning to the world.

And it's a word of great comfort, isn't it, to Christian believers, especially those who are beleaguered, who are persecuted, who are opposed for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ. He comes to judge the whole earth.

And they will know that He is the sovereign Lord. And they will know that His own people are beloved, even when they seem to let Him down so badly.

God will punish violence and aggression against His people. And secondly, see what chapters 26 and 27 tell us is that God will also punish the avarice of societies that abuse their material blessings in economic oppression.

[25 : 10] These chapters are devoted to Tyre, as is chapter 28, including Sidon, these neighboring city-states about 100 miles north of Jerusalem on the coast of what's modern-day Lebanon.

Tyre was a great mercantile city. It was the wealthiest of all these Phoenician ports. It was blessed with two harbors. It had an island linked to the mainland by a causeway.

But here are three chapters, each with a group of oracles of judgment. And each ends the same way in chapter 26, verse 21, and in chapter 27, verse 36, and in chapter 28, verse 19, the same way, you will come to a dreadful end.

Why, sir? It seems so tragic. Look first at chapter 27, which is a lament for Tyre for its magnificence and its beauty. Pictures of flourishing city and a culture full of wonderful buildings, verse 4, made perfect in beauty.

Think of places like Florence or Rome or Athens of old. Verse 8 tells us it was filled with skilled men, expert seamen.

[26 : 26] Verse 10, great soldiers. Verses 12 to 25, they lay out the extraordinary and vast business interest, huge trade in metals and minerals and animals and all kinds of valuable commodities.

It was the heart of a magnificent trading empire. It was creating wealth and prosperity and employment. It was creating a living for many, many people. Wonderful blessings.

Positive things to bless the world with. Tyre is painted here as like a vast galleon. Look at verse 25. Filled, heavy laden in the heart of the seas. But, verse 26, it was heading for calamity. To be wrecked by the east wind. Verse 32, destroyed in the midst of the seas. Verse 36, come to a dreadful end.

[27 : 28] And there's no clear reason given here in chapter 27 except perhaps the hint in verse 25 the ship had become a bit blasé and overconfident. Overfilled perhaps.

Overladen. Overconfident in itself and just forgetting the perils of what an east wind could bring. And there may be a hint there that the looming trouble came from the east, from Babylon, which would indeed be what brought Tyre's nemesis.

But there are just hints. But if you turn back to chapter 26 from the lament to the oracle, those hints I think are very clearly spilt out. And it was excessive greed, avarice, that corrupted Tyre and led to rapacious exploitation for the sake of insatiable gain.

And indeed she gloats over Jerusalem's downfall seeing it as a great opportunity for her economic gain. Look at verse 2. Aha! The gate of the peoples is broken.

It swung open to me. I shall be replenished now that she is laid waste. And that's probably referring to Judah's ability to charge tariffs for the movement of goods up and down the coast being taken away now that she had been destroyed.

[28 : 49] And that would simply greatly increase the profits for Tyre and all of its trade to these southern nations. And again, it's just so true to life, isn't it?

The machinations of nations, how loyalties so quickly change on the promise of gain, of territory, of wealth, of access to commodities, and so on. Avarice so easily eclipses ethics in the world.

Isn't that right? We turn a blind eye to all kinds of evils. We'll become allies with all kinds of unsavory regimes if it opens up markets for our wares.

Which, of course, all too often in the West here, is weapons that we love to sell, which keeps all sorts of very unsavory regimes in comfort.

The military industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned about as he left office has a great deal to answer for over these last 60 years, hasn't it?

[29 : 51] It's alive and well in the world today. Which is why we have such a clamor for so many more wars. But you see, what this tells us is that God sees the corruption of such avarice-driven opportunism and oppression.

And therefore, what God says in verse 3, I am against you. And if God is against you, it doesn't matter who in the world is for you, does it? And his instrument here, verse 7, is going to be Nebuchadnezzar, king of kings, who would come and bring siege to Tyre for years and years, over a decade in fact.

Later, it was Alexander the Great who finished the job, just one of the many nations that God promises here to bring against her. And it's heavy with irony, you see.

She's going to be destroyed by her own strength. It was the sea that made her. And it will be the sea and her waves that will destroy her, verse 4.

What was once a vast and beautiful place, verse 5, is going to be reduced to a bare rock, to a tiny little fishing port, just a few nets spread out.

[31 : 10] And so it was. History records it. And the image at the end of the chapter, if you look at verses 19 to 21, is the image of being uncreated.

God brings the great deep over her. That's the language, isn't it, of the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1, verse 1. The great deep and the chaos and the darkness.

And it recalls the flood and the judgment that brought engulfing of the earth again with water. It's a dreadful end. Verse 20, in the pit, the world below, it's a picture of death.

It's a picture of hell itself. It's a very antithesis of the beauty of the land of the living that God speaks about. A dreadful end. And again, it's a great warning, isn't it, to the world, to a world of high culture, of beauty, of success, of trade, of wealth and prosperity.

All of these things, they are blessings of God. But so easily, these things become God's, don't they? The love of all such material wealth is the root of all kinds of evil, says the apostle.

[32 : 30] A snare that plunges people into ruin and destruction. That's Paul's words in 1 Timothy 6. And the spirit of the great ship Tyre is truly alive the world over today, isn't she?

And indeed, is still the root of all kinds of ruin and evil and destruction. Think of the avarice that drives so much big business to become corrupt.

To cover up all manner of harms in order to just maximize profit. Think of the evidence of chemical toxicities that have been hidden so often by big agribusinesses.

Or metal toxicities that have been hidden by big business. Or drug toxicities that have been buried and hidden by big pharma. Think of the countless number of health issues, of illnesses, of deaths that have just been disregarded because the billions are flowing in to these big multinationals. Think of the political classes with their eye constantly on the revolving door between parliament and the boardroom or the quangos or the big businesses. that lobby for them and that they lobby for and then invite them onto their boards for vast sums of money and gain and status.

[33 : 49] It's just the world as we know it today, isn't it? It's the world of Tyre, just the same. And so it's a real warning to a world driven by avarice, a world that's driven by that to exploit, to oppress.

It's a warning to the nations. And it's a warning to the supranational powers today. Many of the multinational companies of the world today are far bigger than about 95% of the world's economies. I just read an article this week telling me that Apple alone is bigger and more valuable than the gross domestic product of Canada, Brazil, Russia, and South Korea. And if it was a country, it would be part of the G7.

Well, with such greatness comes great responsibility. It's God who creates such wealth and power and it is God who can uncreate it.

No one can withstand his great east wind. That's the point of this chapter. I am against you, says the Lord. And if God is against you, that can mean only one thing, a dreadful end, a great undoing.

[35 : 02] And of course, it's a warning also, isn't it, to the church in every age and to every Christian. Because we can also be easily ensnared, can't we, with the love of the things of this world.

What Jesus calls in his parable the deceitfulness of riches. And he warns, remember, in that parable of the sword that these things can so easily grow up and choke the life out of his followers and in the end render them unfruitful.

And what a dreadful end that must be. To have known so much, to have tasted so much of the goodness of the gospel. To have tasted of the powers of the age to come, as the apostle puts it, and yet, to fall away.

God forbid. Which is, Paul warns, doesn't he, those who are blessed with material things, which really is, every one of us in this nation, not to set our hopes on these uncertain things, as he calls them, but rather to be rich in good works, to be ready to share, to be generous with all that we have. But this picture of Tyre and its end, you see, is a picture of the whole of this human world, which, like Tyre, just lives as though it was going to live forever. But not so.

[36 : 24] It's no accident that when you come to the very end of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 18, the great lament for Babylon, which epitomizes the city of the whole of man in rebellion to God, it's filled with language that comes right out of this chapter.

This chapter in Ezekiel. The lament for Tyre here looms over the whole wide world. It tells us of the dreadful end that there must be for every pretension of man that is set in opposition to the goodness and the righteousness of God.

This is the story of all mankind we're reading here. And that brings us, you see, to chapter 28 and to the oracle aimed at the king of Tyre because he personifies, he epitomizes the very spirit of this godless empire.

And again, the message is just as stark. God will punish the arrogance and the pride of man who sets himself up as God against God.

God. The king of Tyre here embodies the whole human delusion of deity. Look at verse 2. Because your heart is proud, you have said, I am a god.

[37 : 38] I sit in the heart of the seas. I sit in the seat of the gods. And you see, that is the real heart of this whole issue really exposed.

All the aggression against God's people in this world, all the avarice that craves for the ownership of the materials of this world, all of it comes from the arrogance in the human heart that sets itself up proudly to make us believe that we are gods.

We rule ourselves. My body. My life. My choice. My way. My way. That's what the king of Tyre epitomizes.

Because you see, the more wealth, the more position, the more power that a human being has, the greater their capacity for that utter self-delusion. Notice the focus.

Verse 3. There's intellectual pride, isn't there? Pride in human wisdom. Wiser than Daniel. No secret is hidden from you. Of course, Daniel himself was very quick to deny any such wisdom and make very clear that all that he knew came from revelation only from God himself.

[38 : 58] It was not his wisdom. And his pride in wealth, verse 5. Your trade has so enriched you that you become proud in your wealth. Well, it's another reminder, isn't it, just of the powerful perils of material success.

And godless human power always corrupts. And the greater that power, the greater the capacity there is for that corruption. And by the way, that's why the greatest corruptions among the nations of the world will never be found among the least powerful ones, but the most powerful ones.

Not among the poorest ones, but among the richest ones. We delude ourselves if we think otherwise. We like to think of tinpot nations and their corruption.

Not so. Christopher Wright points to verses 16 to 18 here in chapter 28, and he calls these verses pointed descriptions of the malaise of the modern Western domination of the world.

Verse 16, look, violence associated with the domination of trade. Verse 17, arrogance associated with all sorts of aesthetic brilliance and intellectual corruption.

[40 : 11] And verse 18, dishonest trading that makes a mockery of professions of religion and morality. It's very salutary, isn't it, when you let that sink in?

As my father points out, such arrogance is far truer of our own time than it could ever have been in Ezekiel's because ours is the generation that has made such gigantic strides in technological achievement and by this fact is tempted to feelings of God-like power.

But God sees all this and He will judge such arrogance. He will teach proud people. Verse 2, you are a man and know God.

verse 9, when you are killed, your mortality will be demonstrated beyond all that. Will you say I am a God in the presence of those who kill you?

Will Noah Yuval Harari, the intellectual guru of the World Economic Forum, will he still be proclaiming homo Deus, man is God, that's the title of his latest book, The Triumph of Man, will he still be proclaiming that when he is rotting in the grave?

[41 : 36] No. And all who think like that will perish under the judgment of God. That is what verse 10 means.

It is cursed. To die uncircumcised by the hands of foreigners to an Israelite is the epitome of divine curse. It is a highway to hell itself.

It is a highway to hell itself. And this dreadful end, you see, is not just of the king of Tyre, this one tyrant of old. It is manifestly obvious, isn't it, that God is picturing in him the story of every single human being and their sin.

That is obvious in the language of the lament from verse 11 to 19, which are full, aren't they, of the language of Genesis 2 and 3. They echo the original rebellion of humankind in Eden.

Once, verse 13, you were in Eden, the garden of God. You were clothed with jewels. A king ruling for God. Verse 14, the anointed guardian of God's holy mountain.

[42 : 42] Blameless, beautiful. That's Genesis 2. But, verse 16, you sinned and I cast you out.

That's Genesis 3. And the heart of the sin, verse 17, pride. Your heart was proud because of your beauty.

You corrupted the wisdom for the sake of your splendor. Man was indeed splendid. The crown of creation, the very image of God's beauty, God's splendor.

But he tried to usurp God. Tempted by the serpent to be in his image instead. To image the great usurper of God's place who rebelled, who wanted to be the ruler of this world not for God, but against God.

And that's why many have seen since the very earliest days of the church in the words of this chapter, shadows of the fall of Satan himself. Similar to Isaiah chapter 14 where very similar language is used.

[43 : 53] We want to be careful of course because the Bible doesn't invite us to speculate about the story of Satan. It's possible to come far too obsessed with these kind of things. But the New Testament does tell us plainly of a rebellion in the spiritual realm of fallen angels, angels who rebelled and God judges.

Peter tells us of that. Jude tells us of that. Jesus himself speaks about the devil and his angels, a rebellious spiritual force. And the Bible is very clear, isn't it, that behind all such lures to arrogant

pride, to defiance, the usurping God's place in this world, behind all of these lures are the evil one himself, the great deceiver who perverts utterly the most beautiful, the most good and worthy things, to turn the holy splendor in man into just heinous sordidness and corruption.

And do note the beauty, the attractiveness of the language here in this chapter. As one writer noticed, in the emphasis here on demonic evil, it's not on the low and the ugly and the disgusting, but on the contrary, it's on the high and the beautiful and the bright to which the prophet draws our attention.

It's in the guise as an angel of light that Satan is at his most devastating. And just so, you see, the splendor of God's blessing on the culture, on the intellect, on the prosperity of this king of Tyre, was used by the evil one to stoke pride and arrogance and a grasping at deity.

I am God. And so, you see, in his story, we see the truth, don't we, that lies at the very heart of all this world's evil.

[45 : 49] It's always rooted in pride in an arrogant usurping of the place of God himself. I have become God.

Displacing God. I have usurped the throne of God. And that's the story that's true of everything that is wrong in this world of men.

And it's the story of everything that is wrong in every man in this world. It's the story of every human being from the very beginning. And alas, in the fall of Tyre, it's pictured not only God's judgment in history on that proud empire, indeed, on every proud empire of the world.

What we see here is not just the story of the past, but the story of the future, of all that will pass away in God's wrath. It pictures for us the dreadful end that will come to this whole world one day when proud humanity, when the city of man set up in defiance against God, will be destroyed and come to a dreadful end and be no more forever.

As I said, it's no accident that John's vision of the end of all history in the book of Revelation uses language directly out of this chapter. Revelation 17 pictures human societies the great prostitute seated on many waters just like Tyre here, but there it's called Babylon the Great, the city of man, and behind it is the same, the beast, Satan himself.

[47 : 31] But in Revelation 18, we read a very similar lament for the destruction of Babylon, for the destruction forever of the arrogant empire of man, to the song of great hallelujahs from all the saints in heaven.

And after that, Satan himself is thrown into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever, a dreadful end forever. And so what was true in history for all these godless nations will be true one day for all the godless society of this world.

There's no escape. There's no hope of salvation from that in any earthly power. Only, only in the surrender of all hope to the sheer mercy of God, for only He can save.

And verses 20 to 26, if you look at them at the end of chapter 20, they really sum it all up because all will know that the Lord is God of earth and heaven.

And they will know it either in judgment, like Sidon here, alongside Tyre and all the others who hate and scorn God and His people. Look at verse 22.

[48 : 52] They will know that I am the Lord when I execute judgments in her. They will know His divine sovereignty either in judgment or, astonishing as it is, in mercy, which is still a living hope.

And verses 24 to 26 here are the very center of these whole eight chapters of judgment on the world. There's exactly 97 verses before them and another 97 verses after them to the end of chapter 32.

But these verses are central. They are the key to the whole message. And what do they speak of? Well, look at them. They speak of a God whose covenant of salvation is still unbreakable.

unbreakable. Yes, He will curse those who curse His people. But so also, He will bless those who bless Abraham's seed, who call on Abraham's God, the covenant Savior.

They will know that He is the Lord, verse 26, their God. Notice those words. Their God. when He restores and gathers and makes secure all of those who will turn back to Him and who will therefore find life and salvation.

[50 : 16] See, that is why all these chapters of terrible warning are here. In fact, that's why there are these chapters here of deep lament for Tyre and for all that they represent in terms of rebellious humanity.

Remember back to chapter 18? Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord? I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, so turn and live.

That's why all these chapters are here. They are a call to repent. To not know God in judgment, but to know Him in His grace and His mercy, in restoration to His place of wonderful safety and security and peace.

From the very beginning God has been calling sinful mankind to repent, to know Him as God and as Savior, to find true life. That is why the climax of history, Jesus Christ, God the Son, came Himself to call first His own people, Israel, to repent, to return, to come back under His rule, under His kingship.

But He sent then His people out to where? All the nations. All the nations under God's judgment to declare this gospel that through Him all nations are called to bow to Him, to belong to Him, and to be restored through penitent faith to His kingdom forever.

[51 : 47] Because He comes, maybe sooner than we know, to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness. Indeed, the Apostle Paul tells the Athenians, doesn't he, the day and the date has been fixed when Jesus will judge the living and the dead.

And so, the great question for everyone, the only question that will really ever matter in the end is this, on that day, will you know Him like Sidon here and all these others when He executes judgments, dreadful and final?

Or will you know Him as the Savior? Will you know Him as the Lord who is your God? Don't leave here this morning until you know that the answer to that question for you is the latter, that you will know Him as your God.

And you can because God tells us again and again, and we've seen it through this very book, Ezekiel, I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord.

So you turn and you will live. That's God's word to all of us this morning.

[53 : 17] Don't wait, don't delay, heed Him and live. let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are a God of truth and of clarity.

You hide nothing from us, not least of Your righteous judgment on the evil, the wickedness in this world and alas, also in our own hearts.

How we thank You that You that Your word calls us to the hope that there truly still is for everyone who will turn to You and know You as their God through Jesus Christ, Your Son.

So hear us, Lord, open our hearts and turn us to You this day, we pray, for the glory of our Savior and for the blessing of all those upon whom You have set Your grace.

Amen. Amen. Amen.