# Ah, Sovereign LORD

## The Recognition of the Sovereignty of God by the Nations

| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A** | 7 "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. 8 He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland. He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you, and raise a roof of shields against you. 9 He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. | 15 "Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in your midst? | 19 "For thus says the Lord GOD: When I make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited, |
| **B** | 10 His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots, when he enters your gates as men enter a city that has been breached. 11 With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will kill your people with the sword, | 16 Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. | when I bring up the deep over you, and the great waters cover you, |

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and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground.

**C** [12] They will plunder your riches and loot your merchandise. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. Your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters.

**D** [13] And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more.

**E** [14] I will make you a bare rock. You shall be a place for the spreading of nets. You shall never be rebuilt, for I am the LORD; I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD.

They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you.

[17] And they will raise a lamentation over you and say to you,

" 'How you have perished,
you who were inhabited from the seas,
O city renowned,
who was mighty on the sea;
she and her inhabitants imposed their terror
on all her inhabitants!
[18] Now the coastlands tremble
on the day of your fall,
and the coastlands that are on the sea
are dismayed at your passing.'

[20] then I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old, with 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.

[21] 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."

**Ezekiel 26:7-21**

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# The Sovereign LORD

Who is it that we come to worship early on a Sunday morning? Seems like a good question to ask, given that the vast majority of people in our neck of the woods are still sleeping in right now. What would make us do something like that? I mean, in an episode last year with Charlie Kirk where poor Bill Maher—like a record stuck in its rut—just couldn't dial back his relentless mocking of the idea of God, he paused to give this word from his sponsor: "*Club Random* is brought to you by the Freedom from Religion Foundation. You ever notice how more and more people are stepping away from organized religion? Not my last guest, but in general, it's like we all collectively realize, wait, I don't actually have to go to synagogue on Friday or church on Sundays, and boom, sleeping in won."[1] So who is this what we come to worship?

Perhaps more than any other idea or attribute, the one we Reformed people are known for talking about is God's "sovereignty." I hope that isn't because we use it as a bludgeon to whack people over the head (although I've known one or two who do that), but more because we are deeply

[1] Bill Maher, "Charlie Kirk | Club Random with Bill Maher," *Club Random Podcast* (April 20, 2025).

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concerned over something Arthur Pink noticed in the early 20th century when he said something which is perhaps even more true in our own day than his,

> The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin [mushy] sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence.[2]

I'm reminded of the Democrat "Christian" Texas Senate candidate James Talarico who back in 2021 said, "The first two lines of the Bible, the first two lines of Genesis, use two different Hebrew words to describe God. One is the masculine Hebrew noun for divinity, the second is the feminine Hebrew noun for spirit. God is both masculine and feminine and everything in between. God is nonbinary."[3] I wonder if Pink saw that one coming? At any rate, he continues,

[2] Arthur Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1930), 19-20.
[3] James Talarico, "Texas Republicans have passed their anti-trans bill," (Oct 15, 2021).

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To declare that the Creator's original plan has been frustrated by sin, is to *dethrone* God. To suggest that God was taken by surprise in Eden and that He is now attempting to remedy an unforeseen calamity, is to *degrade* the Most High to the level of a finite, erring mortal. To argue that man is a free moral agent and the determiner of his own destiny, and that therefore he has the power to checkmate his Maker, is to *strip* God of the attribute of Omnipotence. To say that the creature has burst the bounds assigned by his Creator, and that God is now practically a helpless Spectator before the sin and suffering entailed by Adam's fall, is to *repudiate* the express declaration of Holy Writ, namely, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psa. 76:10). In a word, to deny the Sovereignty of God is to enter upon a path which, if followed to its logical terminus, is to arrive at blank atheism.

So what is the sovereignty of God? Might as well continue with Pink, since he gives a great definition:

We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the godhood of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest

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> Thou? (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.[4]

There are all kinds of verses in the Bible that describe God's sovereignty. Besides those you just heard, consider, Job 42:1–2, "Then Job answered the LORD and said: 'I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.'" Or Psalm 135:6, "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps." Or Jeremiah 32:17, "Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you." Or Isaiah 46:9–11, "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning

[4] Ibid., 19.

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and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it." Or Isaiah 55:8–11, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." Or Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." Or Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." This is simply one of the most basic, foundational doctrines in the Bible.

Now, I'm convinced that all true Christians believe in God's sovereignty. If they didn't, why would they pray? But I'll go further than that. I'm convinced that all *human*

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*beings* believe in God's sovereignty, at least on some level. That includes even someone like Bill Mahar. How can I say that? Because God's word does. "What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For this invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Rom 1:19-20).

But if people *know* and even in a deep way believe that God is sovereign, then why is there so much denial of it, not just in the world, but even among Christians? Paul goes on in Romans to explain exactly why. They suppress the truth in their own unrighteousness. To suppress is to put down. They quash and quell the very thought. Why? Not because it isn't obvious. Not because it isn't clear. But rather, because *they don't like* it. It is a moral issue at heart. They love their sin and they love themselves, and so they pretend like little kids closing their eyes and it makes everything go away, that God isn't sovereign. They are. And they'll even use things like the problem of evil to make God seem like a maniacal tyrant while they puff themselves up as the arbiters of all moral truth as they do it.

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This is precisely what we see happen in the passage today as we focus in for a couple of weeks on Tyre. Tyre is not a round rubber wheel on your car! It is one of the most ancient towns on the Phoenician coast, located about 25 miles south of its mother city Sidon[5]—which will have a short oracle against it after the Tyre cycle is concluded. Meaning "To distress" or "Rock" from the root "to besiege," Tyre was an island half a mile from the mainland, that is until Alexander the Great (summer 332 BC) created a causeway out of the rubble of the mainland to besiege it, since the city refused to let him enter to offer sacrifices to Hercules-Melkart (Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 2.16–24; Strabo, Geog 16.2.23). The story of that siege is the stuff of legend and includes Alexander creating a half-mile road in the ocean just so he could then build two 160ft movable towers complete with artillery platforms and catapults that he might blow away defenders on the wall that he couldn't quite reach.[6] Today, Tyre is a peninsula and has been continuously inhabited for millennia.

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[5] For some of the history here, see H. J. Katzenstein, "Tyre (Place)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 686ff.

[6] You can read some of the story on the Wiki, which Heiser has in Michael S. Heiser, "Naked Bible Podcast Transcript Episode 142: Ezekiel 26-27," *Naked Bible Podcast* (Jan 21, 2017), 4.

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The people of Tyre a little different from the other nations mentioned earlier, as Ezekiel does his clockwise motion around the Promised Land, targeting the nations. As Block says, the other nations were all ethnic and tied to the name of the territory. But Tyre was a territorial state made up of the Phoenicians—not newcomers to the region who overthrew preexisting peoples like the others, but the original ancient inhabitants who occupied the area since before the writing of history.[7] As we will see next time, they were extremely wealthy and living on an island with effectively a half mile moat around it made the very thought that they could be terminated a matter of laughter and ridicule.

We saw last time that Ezek 26:1-6, which introduces us to Tyre, properly belonged to the set or oracles that are given in Ezek 25. But we need to recall what we saw there. It begins with the first dated oracle against a nation. "In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me" (Ezek 26:1). Of the seven oracles with dates, this is the *fourth* in chronology, taking place in Feb/Mar, 586, or just three months before Jerusalem falls to Babylon.

[7] Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997–), 29.

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So what did Tyre do? They "said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste" (Ezek 26:1b). Like Ammon, who also said, "Aha" at Judah's destruction, they gloated. But their sin was completely self-absorbed and narcissistic, for their gloating was done in relation to their own glory. *Now that Judah is gone, I can be replenished*. Basically, Judah's destruction created a massive economic and geopolitical opportunity for Tyre. With Jerusalem's gates wide open and no one left trading there, a major commercial hub was now gone. They saw the advantage and tried to grab it.

For what we are thinking about today, Tyre effectively suppressed the truth of what they saw in unrighteousness. They were not sober-minded about Judah's fall. They did not tear their clothes and sit in dust and ashes knowing that the Sovereign of the Universe had just sent his own people into captivity, destroying his own temple because of their persistent, flagrant, unrepentant sins. Rather, they suppressed the truth about how and why Judah had been destroyed as they denied what was plain to their eyes and their ears—knowing full well that God had promised that this

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would happen. They didn't care. They thought that Yahweh would only deal with his people—not with them. I mean, what god of the nations has the power to do things to *other* nations? They thought, "He's *their* god. We have our own god. And he's not angry with us. He'll protect us." They denied Yahweh's sovereignty; they deny Adonai YHWH and for it were about to feel the full heat of his wrathful words.

Today we will look at Ezek 26:7-21. The full extent of the Tyre cycle actually goes for two more chapters! But literarily, these verses appear to be a single unit, with 27:1-28:19 being their own distinct unit. Your Bible likely only has a single heading—beginning in vs. 1 with something like, "Oracle Against Tyre." However, we can note a couple of important features.

First, there appears to be three main chiasms in this chapter (1-14, 15-18, 19-21).[8] The first—which hinges ch. 25-26 together, centers on vs. 6, "And they shall know that I am the LORD." The second centers on a dirge, "How you have perished." The third centers on Tyre being thrown to the low parts of the earth.

[8] RS, "Ezekiel 26:1-14" and "Ezekiel 26:15-21," *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (Mat 4, 2017).

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What's so fascinating is how these chiasms line up perfectly with a three-column weave, which divides the chapter into its three main ideas of 1. a direct assault and irreversible destruction of Tyre by Babylon (7-14), 2. the international reaction and lament of the peoples who watch the fall of the city (15-18), 3. and ultimate divine judgment portraying Tyre as uninhabited like dead cities (19-21). (See woven text at beginning of the sermon). These three columns have a distinct middle (col 2) which is the reaction of the nations to God's decree (col 1) and judgment (col 3) of the destruction of Tyre. That middle is precisely how we opened the sermon: the inevitable recognition that men will and do have that God is sovereign.

That brings up a point about the name of God here that I want to discuss. Five times in our text (7, 14, 15, 19, 21), including the beginning of each column—and going back to 25:1-26:6 we have it ten more times—God is called "Adonai YHWH." The ESV translates this as "Lord GOD," capitalizing "GOD" like it normally capitalizes "LORD." This is confusing, because it's the same word in Hebrew—the divine name: YHWH. Unlike something like Gen 2 where ESV also reads "LORD God," but this time "LORD" is capitalized, because it is the divine name, these

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are not the same. Genesis 2 is "Yahweh Elohim," while this is "Adonai Yahweh."

LORD God (YHWH Elohim)
Lord GOD (Adonai YHWH)

The former is the covenant name YHWH with the generic word for a deity: Elohim. There are many *elohim*, but only one YHWH Elohim. This portrays God as both transcendent Creator God (Elohim) and personal, relational God (YHWH). But Ezekiel loves to call God *Adonai*, which means "My Lord" or "Master" or "Ruler." This stresses God's absolute authority, sovereignty, mastery, and the need for human submission and reverence. Hence, the NIV translates it as "Sovereign LORD," which I like very much. Sovereignty! That's precisely what our passage is about.

As we go through it, we will notice five parallel rows that deal with:

- **A** — Shockwaves of the fall (mainland siege → coastlands shake → city laid waste).
- **B** — Overwhelming force (horses/dust → princes strip robes/tremble → deep waters cover).

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- **C** — Descent/ruin (pillars fall → sit on ground appalled → dwell in the pit among ruins).
- **D** — Loss of joy/glory (music silenced → lament raised → beauty set in land of living, but Tyre excluded).
- **E** — Climactic finality (bare rock, never rebuilt → lament "how you have perished" → dreadful end, never found).

There is also a movement from God who comes from on high to the city (Row A), to the beginning of submersion (B), to descent into ruin and the pit (C), to silencing and exclusion from life (D), to utter erasure and non-existence (E). You can't be brought any lower from any greater high.

## Shockwaves of the Fall (Row 1)

I think it might be interesting, instead of going through this verse-by-verse (or strictly according to the columns), that we look at it according to the five rows, so you can see how the three parts of the oracle are interwoven. We begin in Ezek 26:7, "For thus says the Lord GOD [Adonai YHWH or "Sovereign LORD"]: Behold, I will bring against Tyre…" But vs. 15 begins the same way, "Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre…" And vs. 19 begins the same way again, "For thus says the Lord GOD: When I make you…"

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How different this all is from, "The Word of the LORD came to me," which is what has dominated until the oracles of the nations. The Word is giving way to the Sovereign. God is Sovereign not just over Israel, but all the nations.

Back to vs. 7-9, "I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland. He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you, and raise a roof of shields against you. He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers." The previous oracle had said, "I am against you, O Tyre." Now, that begins to unfold. Previously God said he would bring many nations against it. Now, we see one specified: Babylon, the same power that took out Judah. That's not good! They thought they were safe from Nebuchadnezzar. They were wrong.

Notice how Nebuchadnezzar is called "king of kings." This is the same epitaph he is given in Dan 2:37, "You, O king, are a king of kings." But I want you to hear how that verse ends, lest you think the Bible is suddenly making Nebuchadnezzar a rival to Jesus who also gets called that. "For

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the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory." This is exactly what we are seeing in Ezekiel. Look at what it says, "*I* will bring against Tyre … Nebuchadnezzar." Who is the true king? It is the king that can make other kings do his bidding. The Sovereign Lord is bringing the king of Babylon against Tyre. It is not ultimately speaking Nebuchadnezzar who is doing this. It is exactly like we see Peter tell the people, "For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27–28). God alone is sovereign.

Nevertheless, God uses Nebuchadnezzar like an axe in his hand (to allude to how Isaiah 10:15 puts it). And he sends the full fury of the greatest nation in the world down on Tyre: horses, chariots, horsemen, and a host of soldiers. Ezekiel predicts how he would take out *the mainland*, killing the daughters with the sword. He will go directly to the city—what was called Old Tyre or Continental Tyre, for the island will not fall for centuries. Siege works, mounds, battering rams, axes were all used in a grueling 13-year

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siege, per Josephus, beginning around 585-573 BC. He absolutely devastated the mainland, so much so that Alexander would use the rubble to build the final siege to get to the island.

If we continued with vv. 10-14, we would see how this line of thinking does not stop. But I want us to look across the rows. The parallel of shockwave of the Babylonian army is in vs. 15, "Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in your midst?" The shockwave blasts outward like the explosion felt on Aug 4, 2020 around 1:07pm at the Port of Beirut a mere 45 miles from modern Tyre when, reportedly, a massive detonation caused by improper, long-term storage of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate detonated, killing 218, injuring 7,000, and displacing 300,000 from their homes. The repercussions of what Babylon did to Tyre are going to be felt by many, many more people and I'll return to that at the end, for it is the theme of the second column and it begs our response.

Vs. 19 gives us the final echo of the initial blast. The aftermath. "For thus says the Sovereign LORD: When I

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make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited…" What started out as a siege, and was then heard along the coastlands, has turned into a desolate city. Col 3 will unfold the total erasure of Tyre.

## Overwhelming Force (Row 2)

Picking up the story of the king besieging the city, we return to vs. 10-11. "His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots, when he enters your gates as men enter a city that has been breached. With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will kill your people with the sword, and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground." Previously, it had said that the Babylonian would come "as the sea brings up its waves." Now the image is one of so many horses that that they are covered in a dustbowl of death. The walls shake like Jericho at the sound of God's trumpeters, because there are so many horsemen, wagons, and chariots. Anyone on the street is trampled underfoot. Anyone in the homes is cut through with the sword.

The result around the watching world will be the opposite of Tyre as it watched Judah fall. "Then all the princes of

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the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments" (16). As the army strips the city of its pillars and people, so the princes of the nations will strip off their clothes at what they hear has happened to Tyre. And vs 19b adds the theme of the sea, "When I bring up the deep over you, and the great waters cover you," just as the dust covered them from the horses. Tyre becomes the new Atlantis, sunken beneath the waves, lost forever. The devastation pictured here is incredible. I can't imagine what it would have been like.

## Descent/Ruin (Row 3)

We come to Row 3. "They will plunder your riches and loot your merchandise. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. Your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters" (12). The descent is becoming apparent. First there is a siege. Then there is destruction. Now, the destruction of the city is thrown into the nearby waters, lining the beaches with the statues and silk and ships and all the other materialistic wealth these people horded. Vs. 16b now takes those plunder of clothing and says, "They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every

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moment and be appalled at you." This again is that middle column, the column of the response of the people to the sovereign God's hand against Tyre, but we will come back to this at the end, for this verse is actually the middle square of a 3x5 grid.

Vs. 20, "Then I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited." This verse introduces us to the mythical cosmic descent language we will find later with both Tyre and Egypt. For what is this pit to which they go? It is parallel to Sheol, Hades in the Greek (cf. Isa 14:15; Ezek 31:16), but in such a way that it intensifies it. Thus, it functions very much like Tartarus in Greek cosmology—the lowest part of the underworld.

Curiously, pagans of old would make ritual pits through which they hoped to be able to contact the dead in their necromantic rituals. That's bringing the dead up. But here, the Tyrinians go down to them with no hope of coming back up. They go down to the "people of old" (*ʿam ʿōwlām*) to their "ruins of old" (*koḥŏrāḇōwṯ mēʿōwlām*). To

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the darkest, loneliest, gloomiest, inescapable part of the underworld. And there is no resurrection for them.

## Loss of Joy/Glory (Row 4)

But incredibly, this is not as bad as it gets. Row D is fascinating. Vs. 13, "And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more." This exactly matches vs. 17, "And they will raise a lamentation over you and say to you." So, the sound of dancing and mirth, its feasts, trade triumphs, and cultural vibrancy turns to dirge and lament. Both deal with song, but very different kinds of song. Vs. 20b is the third parallel. "But I will set beauty in the land of the living." What is music, but that which *is beautiful*? There is more than one type of beauty though.

The movement of these three columns of Row 4 is a movement of music, and if you will permit me, I've given you links to each one so you can go listen to them in order yourself later. They take me from something like the inescapable but pagan joy or praise in something like Beethoven's 9th Movement 4: "Ode to Joy," but *not* with its Christian hymn lyrics! Rather, with its original lyrics, "Joy! Joy! Joy, beautiful spark of divinity, Daughter of Elysium, We

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enter, drunk with fire, Thy sanctuary, heavenly one!" written by German poet Friedrich Schiller.[9] This transitions to the silencing of their songs of joy with something like the haunting achingly beautiful aria of defiant hope of Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" in *Turandot* made popular as the opera playing at the very end of *The Sum of All Fears* movie when the bad guys all get what's coming to them, as the lover belts out, "Even you, O Princess, in your cold room, watch the stars and tremble with love and with hope. But my secret is hidden within me, no one shall know my name! … Vanish, O Night! Fade, you stars! Fade, you stars! At dawn, I will win! I will win! I will win!"[10] But Tyre isn't winning (Vincerò! Vincerò! Vincerò!). God is!

Therefore, you come to the lament, something like Henry Purcell's *Dido's Lament* (Dido and Aeneas), as she sings, "Thy hand, Belinda, Darkness shades me, On thy bosom let me rest, More I would, but Death invades me; Death is now a welcome guest."[11] All this finally becomes powerful and primordial in something like Berlioz' *Witches*

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[9] Here's a good rendition. Beethoven, "Beethoven 9th Cymphony – Movement IV – 'Ode to Joy,'" *FolsomGreatMusic* (Sept 2, 2012).
[10] Luciano Pavarotti, 'Nessun dorma,' from *Turandot* (The Three Tenors in Concert 1994," *Warner Classics YouTube* (June 7, 2019, 1994).
[11] See for example, Henry Purcell, "Dido's Lament (Dido and Aeneas), Anna Dennis, soprano," *Voices of Music YouTube* (July 22, 2015).

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*Sabbath* made famous as the music to *The Shining* movie,[12] or Verdi's, "Requiem – II. Dies Irea [DEE-es EE-rah]" with its words, "Day of wrath, that Day!" (You have to see Berstein's version to truly understand).[13] This all shows you through music the ugliness of Tyre and its great sin which it has been celebrating especially as it gloats over the ruins of God's people giving way to pure lamentation and finally to the inbreaking of God's glory and new beauty in the world as his enemy is defeated and his wrath is avenged, giving way to something like the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel's *Messiah*: "Hallelujah! For the LORD God Omnipotent Reigneth!"[14] That's the beauty that is brought back to the world. God's sovereignty is seen again. What will men do?

## Climactic Finality (Row 5)

What will *Tyre* Do? We come to the last row. As the story of Nebuchadnezzar comes to an end, we read vs. 14, "I will make you a bare rock. You shall be a place for the spreading of nets. You shall never be rebuilt, for I am the

[12] Berlioz, "Symphonie Fantastique – V. (Dream of a Witches' Sabbath), London Philharmonic Orchestra (Aug 9, 2022).
[13] Verdi, "Requiem – II. Dies Irea," London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, *Leonard Bernstein YouTube* (Oct 7, 2015, 1970).
[14] G. Handel, "Royal Choral Society: 'Hallelujah Chorus' from Handel's Messiah," *RoyalChoralSoc YouTube* (April 23, 2012).

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Lord; I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD." Do you see how we return to the Sovereign Lord—the Lord GOD? It begins and ends with it. Why? Because it is too late for Tyre to "do" anything. God is going to show them that he is sovereign and there is nothing they can do to stop it. Their place is now completely desolate. Eventually, even the island itself was overrun and destroyed by Alexander. There was nothing left. Tyre became a place merely for fishing—fishing over the ruins of a lost civilization.

That's kind of the song title if you will of their songs being heard no more. Simon and Garfunkel: *I am a rock. I am an island. And a rock feels no pain. And an island never cries*. Because all the people are gone.

But vv. 17b-18 actually become a song, literally. You will notice that the text is set off as poetry. This is a short qinah lament. These are the lyrics:

'How you have perished,
you who were inhabited from the seas,
O city renowned,
who was mighty on the sea;
she and her inhabitants imposed their terror
on all her inhabitants!

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[18] Now the coastlands tremble
on the day of your fall,
and the coastlands that are on the sea
are dismayed at your passing.'

These are but the foretaste of lament to come, as nearly all of chs. 27-28 is a long lament against this proud city.

Vs. 21 takes us to the end, literally: "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." The horror is complete. Not only is Tyre besieged, not only are the people killed, not only do they go down to the pit, their songs are silenced, and they cease all existence in the world of men. And God is glorified. For God is sovereign. And nothing could stop this for Tyre.

That leads to the inevitable application that is brought out very clearly, especially when you understand that the text itself reads as a three column weave. The left (the first narrative) is what God will do through the Babylonian. The right (the last) is what God simply does as an act of his eternal powerful decree as the sovereign God of the world. The middle stands as a true middle. For it gives the response of the people.

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Look down its verses. Vs. 15, "Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall?" Vs. 16, "All the princes of the sea will step down and remove their robes and strip off their garments." Vs. 17, "They will raise a lamentation over you." They will lament how you have perished. In the very middle of the entire story sits this verse, "They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you" (16b).

Who is it that we come to worship early on a Sunday morning? Seems like a good question to ask, given that the vast majority of people in our neck of the woods are still sleeping in right now. What would make us do something like that when people like Bill Maher mock God and sleep in themselves. Who is this what we come to worship?

This is the Sovereign Lord. The Almighty King of the Universe, the Creator of heaven and earth. Nebuchadnezzar, himself the king of kings, was not immune to the same kind of bewitching pride that comes with power and unending wealth. The watchers came to him one night and told him that they had decreed seven years of living like a wild beast before he would return to his senses. And lo, it came to pass. He became almost like a werewolf, howling at the moon, lost to time and sanity. But the man was given a

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measure of grace by God so that we might learn what the people who saw the fall of Tyre learned.

"At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, 'What have you done?'" (Dan 4:34-35).

This was his song, and it was a song of humility, bowing his knee and head before the Most High who alone rules heaven and earth. The center of our stories not only teaches you that you should clothe yourself with trembling in the presence of this God as you watch things he does to the

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kingdoms of this earth and to all the humans upon it who are list dust and mist. It teaches that you *will* do this.

This is not an option, as if you could thwart God receiving all glory, as if you could frustrate him, as if you could check mate him. It is a simple statement of fact. I am not here commanding or asking or requesting or suggesting that you bow like Nebuchadnezzar did. I am telling you that you inevitably will. It is as sure as the day of your birth. It is as certain as the day of your death. The Scripture says the nations *will* know that he is the sovereign Lord.

For one day, you too will go down to the pit, if you do not bow your knee to this great almighty king. And you will know what it means to be a sinner in the hand of an angry God. But the reason we come to God today is *not* because *we* do this out of fear, for we have learned of his great grace through Christ. It is by his grace that we have come to recognize his sovereignty, that is a very different sort of thing.

Tyre's songs are silenced forever, its glory buried in the pit — but God says, "I will set beauty in the land of the living." These are our songs, our hymns of delight and psalms of praise. That beauty is not for the proud who exalt themselves; it is for the humble who come to the One who was

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cast down for us and raised to life. The land of the living has room — even for those who once lived in Tyre — but only through the cross, not through their own splendor. Jesus has conquered both death and the pit. He came back from both, victorious.

*Nessun dorma*: *None shall sleep*. Paul commands, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Eph 5:14). For he has sung the song already, *All'alba vincerò! Vincerò! Vincerò! Vincerò!* At Dawn I win. I win. I win. I win. That is his song. Will we suppress the truth like Tyre, only to tremble and lament in the end? Or will we awake now, bow the knee in faith, and join the song that never ends: "Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

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