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This week's Triennial Torah reading can be found at:

https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Lev 24	Ezek 26-28		1 Peter 3-4
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Leviticus 24

Keep the Fire Burning; Eye for an Eye (Leviticus 24)

The lamps of the menorah were to be lit and kept burning every day (verse 2; Exodus 27:20; 30:7-8). This was symbolic of God's Spirit and His laws. Each day, we must have the light of God burning in us through His Spirit and living by His Word. David prayed to God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). Echoing this, Solomon wrote: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs and instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). When people see us, they should see God shining through us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Just as with the tabernacle lamps, this requires attentiveness and vigilance.

The phrase "from evening until morning indicates tending the lamps twice a day, not tending them throughout the night" (Nelson Study Bible, note on Leviticus 24:2-4). Similarly, we must seek God when we awake each day and before we go to sleep each night to make sure that our spiritual "oil" is renewed (compare Matthew 25:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16)—allowing us to shine every day.

In verses 19-20 of Leviticus 24, we come to the "eye-for-an-eye" principle, mentioned earlier in Exodus 21:23-25. We stated in our highlights on that passage that this was apparently not generally meant to be a literal requirement in meting out justice—that just recompense was the concern. The judges of Israel might have required death or beating with a certain number of stripes. And that would have been literal. But we have no evidence that the judges ever required a hand to be cut off or other bodily mutilation (although it is possible that they did since there is no way at present to really know).

It may be that they would allow the offended party to exact that penalty from someone who had cut his hand off (similar to God's allowance for the nearest of kin to a murder victim to act as an avenger of blood). As mentioned in the highlights for Exodus 21, a big reason for the principle

was not just so that the punishment would fit the crime but so that the punishment would not go beyond the crime. The Nelson Study Bible notes on Leviticus 24:19-20: “Its purpose was not to require the injured party to inflict equal bodily harm on the one who had injured him, but to forbid him from inflicting greater bodily harm.”

Of course, while God’s system may have allowed justice to be measured out in kind as described, His desire was for mercy in the face of remorse—and also for restitution and care for the victim. If someone cut another person’s hand off, the person who lost his hand would be wiser to not cut the offender’s hand off. The judges would perhaps order a beating for pain and suffering and that the offender work (maybe for the rest of his life) to provide the lost livelihood to the one who lost his hand and was no longer able to work. (If the offender’s hand was cut off too, he could not work to help the victim. So, it would not seem to really help matters—except in giving some sense of justice and providing a deterrent in the society.)

The same goes for blinding an offender if he has blinded someone else. This would create two needy beggars instead of just one. It seems wiser to demand that the seeing criminal be indebted and perhaps indentured to the victim.

Ezekiel’s Prophecy Against Tyre (Ezekiel 26)

Chapters 26-28 of Ezekiel contain a series of oracles against Tyre, the great Phoenician seaport and major trading center of the ancient world, located in what is now the country of Lebanon. The prophecy was given in the 11th year of Ezekiel’s captivity on the first day of the month—but what month is not stated (26:1). Perhaps the month was considered as a given, following what was probably the previous date reference before the chapters of this section were rearranged thematically—the 11th year, third month, first day (31:1). This would mean the Tyre prophecies began later the same day—in the late spring of 587 B.C.

Tyre says of Jerusalem, “Aha! She is broken...she is laid waste” (verse 2). This could be a prophecy of what Tyre would say once Jerusalem had ultimately fallen to the Babylonians. Yet it could just as easily reflect what the Tyrians had already expressed when this prophecy was given. For with the siege against Jerusalem underway, onlookers from other countries no doubt said things like, “It’s all over for Jerusalem.”

Tyre says, “The gateway of the peoples...is turned over to me” (verse 2). “The people of Tyre were enthusiastic about the fall of Jerusalem, seeing it as an opportunity to further increase its own wealth. This was not only because Tyre expected to gain commissions from the sale of much of the Holy City’s spoil, but also because Judah had controlled the important land trade routes in the area. Tyre, just 35 miles from the Sea of Galilee and 100 miles from Jerusalem, expected that more of the land routes’ income would swell her own coffers” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on Ezekiel 26). And there may be more to this, as we will see.

The remainder of the prophecy deals with punishment to come on Tyre. Verses 3-7 give a summary, and the passage that follows provides details. Some historical background and information on the layout of the city makes it easier to understand aspects of the prophecy. "Tyre was in effect [originally] two islands (they were later made one) joined to the mainland by King Hiram I [in the days of King Solomon]... In doing so he created ideal harbors, endorsing a seafaring tradition" (Karen Farrington, *Historical Atlas of the Holy Land*, 2003, p. 94). "Under Hiram's reign, Tyre flourished. The original layout of the city was in two parts: an offshore island, which was the older part of the city, and the overspill on the mainland. Hiram developed the island-city and used landfill to connect it to the other small islands nearby, and to the mainland by a narrow causeway" (Lonely Planet: Lebanon, 2001, p. 231).

Tyre was later incorporated into the Assyrian Empire. After the fall of Assyria, the city submitted to Nebuchadnezzar's Neo-Babylonian Empire. At the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, Tyre plotted with Judah and other nations against Babylon, but nothing then came of it. But soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Tyre did rebel, leading to a siege by the Babylonians. The siege lasted for 13 long years, during which the Babylonian soldiers were worked very hard (see Ezekiel 29:18). "During the siege, the Tyrians destroyed a causeway which had connected the offshore islands to the mainland [the one Hiram had built], and retreated behind the [island] city's walls, said to be 50 metres (160 ft) high" (Insight Guide: Syria & Lebanon, 2000, p. 316). Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the mainland part of the city but really had nothing to show for all his efforts, having failed to capture the city's vast wealth. Grudgingly, the island city did again acknowledge his sovereignty but remained semiautonomous—though the Tyrian king and royal family were deported to Babylon, in line with what Jeremiah had foretold in Jeremiah 27.

The Babylonian Empire fell to the Persians in 539 B.C. In 525, the Persians sent forces to exert their control over Western Asia and Egypt. Tyre then became a Persian vassal state.

"The next in Tyre's long line of strongman-conquerors was more successful than Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander the Great was able to conquer the known world following his defeat of the Persian army and, in 332 BC, he marched along coastal Phoenicia exacting tribute from all its city-states. In its time-honoured tradition, Tyre alone decided to resist. The city was thought to be impregnable, but upon arriving in 332 BC Alexander built a mole or breakwater in the sea to reach the city [essentially rebuilding Hiram's causeway from the rubble of the mainland city]. This impressive feat was carried out under a hail of missiles. At the same time on the mainland, Alexander's engineers were constructing huge mobile towers called heelepoleis, which at 20-storeys high, were the tallest siege towers ever used in the history of war. After seven months these great war machines lumbered across the mole and lowered the drawbridge, unleashing archers and artillery on the city. Tyre fell after seven months and Alexander, enraged at the dogged resistance of the Tyrians which had caused heavy Greek losses, destroyed half the city. The city's 30,000 citizens were massacred or sold into slavery. This destruction heralded the domination of the Greeks in the Mediterranean" (Lonely Planet: Lebanon, pp. 231-232).

“The history of the city did not end there, however. Eighteen years after Alexander captured the city it was again besieged, this time by Antigonos, one of Alexander’s generals. That the city was far from indefensible is demonstrated by the fact that it took 15 months for Antigonos to capture it. Far greater than the damage caused by Alexander’s siege was the reopening of the canal connecting the Red Sea with the Egyptian port of Alexandria. This diverted much of the trade that had formerly passed through Tyre” (Robert Bradshaw, “Tyre,” 1999, <http://www.robibrad.demon.co.uk/tyre.htm>).

“The city...after a period of Seleucid rule following Alexander’s death, became autonomous in 126 BC. In 64 BC, Tyre became a Roman province and later became the capital of the Roman province of Syria-Phoenicia... By the 4th century AD it had recovered some of its former splendour and a basilica was built on the site of the former temple of Melkart... The city was taken by the Arabs in 635, and its prosperity continued... People from other coastal cities had fled to Tyre when the Crusaders started to take the Middle East in 1124. They felt safe behind Tyre’s ‘impregnable’ walls. After a siege of five and a half months, Tyre’s defenses collapsed and the Christian army occupied the city and the surrounding fertile land. The Crusaders built the defensive walls and Tyre remained in Crusader hands for 167 years until the Mamluk army...retook the city in 1291. Over time, the classical and early Christian remains were demolished, and the worked stone reused in later buildings. The ports were silted up and the mole which connected the island to the mainland became a sand bar; the city of Tyre became a peninsula which is now covered in modern buildings”—the modern Lebanese city of Sour or Sour (Lonely Planet: Lebanon, pp. 232-233).

With this history in mind, let’s look at some specifics of Ezekiel’s prophecy. God said that He would bring “many nations” against Tyre as “waves” of the sea (Ezekiel 26:3). The plurality of nations could conceivably refer to the many peoples that made up the Babylonian Empire. Or they could refer to a succession of nations that would conquer Tyre over the centuries. Either interpretation fits Ezekiel’s prophecy. Notice again that they come as waves. While this is a fitting metaphor for military forces assaulting a seaport or an island city, it may also signify successive conquests. Again, either interpretation fits.

Verses 7-11 refer specifically to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. Since the Babylonian ruler did not take the island citadel, the heart of the city, the destruction described in this passage must refer to what he would do to the mainland city and Tyre’s “daughter villages in the fields”—that is, outlying villages on the mainland. Nebuchadnezzar is denoted in these verses by name and then by the pronoun “he.”

But in verse 12, the pronoun switches from “he” to “they”—perhaps referring back to the “they” of verse 4, denoting the many nations that would come against Tyre. In verses that follow, God uses the pronoun “I” to show that He is ultimately behind what is happening.

Notice the pronouncement of verse 12. God says that “they”—the nations to follow

Nebuchadnezzar—would be successful in plundering Tyre. More remarkably, it is stated that they would lay the stones, timber and soil of Tyre “in the midst of the water.” This must be, at least on some level, a reference to what Alexander’s forces did. They dumped the rubble of the mainland city into the sea to rebuild the causeway out to the island fortress. It is surely no mere coincidence that Alexander’s army conquered the city in this amazing way.

Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the city, but he did not accomplish all that was prophesied for Tyre. Alexander went further, casting the rubble from Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction into the sea and plundering the wealth of Tyre by capturing the island city.

But did Alexander, then, completely accomplish the prophesied ruin of Tyre? God said He would scrape the dust from Tyre, leaving it like the top of a rock (verses 4, 14). He also said it would be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, sunk in the deep (verses 5, 14, 19). In both cases, this could perhaps apply to what Alexander did to the mainland city area, scraping it bare for material to cast into the sea to construct his causeway. Yet nothing of the sort happened, or has ever happened, to the main city—the island city that was protected by 160-foot-high walls. Alexander did conquer it but obviously did not lay it waste as the prophecy would seem to imply. Some of the island city is now below water, but most of the ancient island remains a thriving city to this day.

God said of Tyre, “You shall never be rebuilt... so that you may never be inhabited... You shall be no more; though you are sought for, you will never be found again” (verses 14, 20-21). It is difficult to reconcile this with the history of Tyre up to the present time. It is possible that God was speaking exclusively of the mainland area. While there are Roman ruins on what used to be the mainland coast, seeming to indicate rebuilding, it may be that the original Phoenician city was located not here but somewhere nearby. Regrettably, if the original mainland city was completely scraped bare, we don’t know exactly where it was located—which could conceivably fit the description of never being found again. (Curiously, an uninhabited area a bit south of the modern Tyrian peninsula surrounding several major freshwater springs has been declared a nature reserve, with construction forbidden by law—an interesting way to keep it from being rebuilt if this is the site of ancient mainland Tyre.)

Yet it seems odd that God’s announcement of doom on Tyre would apply primarily to the mainland overspill of the city and not the main island city itself with its towering walls. Indeed, notice verse 13, where God says, “I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more.” Consider that before the mainland city was destroyed, the people simply moved a half-mile out across the water to the island citadel—where singing and music could still be heard (and can still be heard today). So, it seems likely that Alexander did not accomplish all that God had foretold for the city’s destruction.

Notice again the summary of Tyre’s judgment in verses 3-7, ending with the intended purpose in punishment: “Then they shall know that I am the LORD” (verse 7). Recall from chapters 25 and 29-30 that the same thing is said of the outcome of punishment on Judah’s other national neighbors, which seems to signify that ultimate fulfillment of these prophecies will not come until

the end time. Jeremiah had warned Tyre's ruler that sword, famine, pestilence and slavery would come on those nations that failed to submit to Babylon (Jeremiah 27)—but many of the Tyrians escaped destruction or captivity in Nebuchadnezzar's time, and it is likely that nothing of what Jeremiah said was recalled by anyone in Tyre at the time of Alexander. Indeed, the Tyrians as a people did not really come to know that the true God was God in either Nebuchadnezzar's or Alexander's invasions. Most of them probably did not even know that God had pronounced any judgment against them at all.

Indeed, there are other indications of duality in the prophecies of Tyre in chapters 26-28, pointing to fulfillment in ancient times and the end time. One is the similarity of the description of Tyre and its fall in chapter 27 to that of end-time Babylon in Revelation 18. Another indication is the obvious parallel with other prophecies of Tyre that are apparently dual in nature, such as the one in Amos 1:9-10 and Isaiah 23.

Furthermore, we've already seen in Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50-51 another parallel: God's prophecies of Babylon's utter destruction and desolation, where He states that it would never be resettled or rebuilt—even though the site of ancient Babylon has been resettled and parts of it rebuilt over the centuries. As noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on those passages, the explanation is that God is speaking primarily there of end-time Babylon, a powerful global empire, religious system and trading bloc centered in Rome in the years just prior to Jesus Christ's return. In fact, God foretold of Babylon through Jeremiah: "How Babylon has become desolate among the nations! The sea has come up over Babylon; she is covered with the multitude of its waves" (Jeremiah 51:41-42). Is not this very close to what God foretold of Tyre through Ezekiel?

In the Bible Reading Program's comments on Isaiah 13 and 23, it was explained that many people of Babylonian and Phoenician descent eventually displaced the Romans and became spread across southern Europe. Thus, the European empire of the last days can logically be referred to as either Babylon or as Tyre, the chief Phoenician city. The end-time Babylonian capital, the city of Rome, is located close to the sea. And figuratively, the waters from which Babylon rises and over which it rules represent "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15)—back into which this great power bloc will sink when it is at last overrun by those it has oppressed.

With this in mind, consider again Tyre's statement against Jerusalem in Ezekiel 26:2: "She is broken who was the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled." In other prophecies in the book of Ezekiel, Jerusalem is often representative of all Israel in the end time. So, this particular verse, besides the ancient application, may also portray a future "Tyre" or "Babylon" rejoicing over the fall of modern-day "Israel" (meaning the United States, Britain, the Jewish people, etc.), seeking to take over the Israelites' position as gatekeeper of world commerce and banking and to seize their wealth. In any case, we know from other prophecies that this will happen—and that it will bring God's judgment.

Finally, it is clear that the destructions of ancient Tyre under Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander did indeed fulfill important elements of God's prophecy in Ezekiel 26. But these did not constitute complete and final fulfillment. They were, in fact, mere precursors to the ultimate fall of the latter-day "Tyre" at the time of Christ's second coming, when the whole Babylonian-Tyrian system will be plundered, stripped bare and destroyed forever—never to rise again.

The Sinking of the Great Merchant Ship of Tyre (Ezekiel 27)

"Ezekiel's prediction of the endless death of Tyre (26:1-21) is followed by messages about the doomed city [in chapters 27 and 28]. First comes a funeral dirge, picturing the great commercial center as a merchant ship. The prophet describes her construction (27:1-11) and then lists her trading partners (vv. 12-24)... The prophet completes his metaphor with a vivid description of the sinking of richly laden Tyre (vv. 25-36)" (Bible Reader's Companion, chapters 27-28 summary).

This great "ship of state" is made of the finest materials—including planks of fir trees from "Senir," another name for Mount Hermon or another peak in its range (see Deuteronomy 3:9; Song of Solomon 4:8; 1 Chronicles 5:23).

For "merchant of the peoples on many coastlands" in verse 3, the New Living Translation has "trading center of the world." Like the previous chapter, this one is dual—applying to ancient Tyre as well as Tyre of the last days (modern Babylon), a global economic market and religious empire centered in Europe. The mourning of the participants in the system over the sinking of Tyre is quite similar to the mourning of participants in the Babylonian system of the end time (compare especially verses 29-33; Revelation 18:17-19). The Nelson Study Bible notes on Revelation 18:9-19, "This section is framed like an ancient lament and is especially similar in content to Ezekiel's lament over the destruction of Tyre (see Ezek. 27)." Moreover, as noted in our previous reading, many in southern Europe are descended from the ancient Babylonians and Phoenician Tyrians, strengthening the identification.

Many nations participated in the international marketplace of ancient Tyre, as their modern counterparts will participate in the Tyrian or Babylonian system of the end time. There was and will be Ashurite or Assyrian involvement (verses 6, 23). "Men of Gammad" in the watchtowers (verse 11) may be a mistranslation. Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary offers: "Rather, as the Tyrians were Syro-Phoenician, from a Syriac root, meaning daring, 'men of daring'... It is not likely the keeping of watch 'in the towers' would have been entrusted to foreigners. Others take it from a Hebrew root, 'a dagger,' or short sword... 'short-swordsmen'" (note on verse 11).

There is mention of Javan or Yavan (verse 13), the biblical Hebrew word used elsewhere for Greece. Javan is listed in the table of nations of Genesis 10 as the son of Noah's son Japheth, father of the yellow-skinned Mongoloid peoples of the Far East but also of many white and olive-skinned people of the Mediterranean. Many southern Europeans, such as the Greeks, Cypriots, Italians and Spaniards, have traditionally been traced, at least in part, back to Javan's sons Elishah, Kittim and Tarshish—all mentioned in Ezekiel 27 (verses 6-7, 12). (It may be that

Japheth himself was Caucasian and his wife Oriental, allowing for offspring to take after either side of the family.)

It appears that the sons of Tarshish originally settled in southern Asia Minor, giving their name to the city of Tarsus. Some later migrated from here to Spain, giving their name to Tartessus, the city of Tarshish to which Jonah fled (and which gave its name to the famed Phoenician and Israelite “ships of Tarshish”). This western branch of Tarshish would today, then, seem to be a significant portion of the people of Spain, Portugal and Latin America. Yet there may well be an eastern branch of this family. The traditions of ancient Japan claim its people were led to the “Land of the Rising Sun” by a three-legged crow—the “sun crow” representing the sun deity in the ancient Far East. Surprisingly, the rare imagery of three-legged birds as sun symbols has also been found on coins of Asia Minor, where sat Tarsus. Might this region be the origin of some of the Japanese?

Interestingly, the Japanese traditionally trace themselves mainly through two peoples, known as the Yamato and the Kumaso. The Kumaso, from whom the lower class is predominantly descended, are believed to be of Malay or Indonesian origin. But the Yamato, ancestors of the ruling class, appear to have come from far in the west. A.L. Sadler, a professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney, wrote in his 1946 book *A Short History of Japan*: “Judging from the Caucasian and often Semitic physiognomy seen in the aristocratic type of Japanese, the Yamato were mainly of Caucasic, perhaps Iranian, origin. These were...modified to some extent by mingling with the Mongoloid rank and file... The colour of the Japanese does not differ at all from that of the South European races like Spain and Italy... The Alpine or Central European race...is of much the same type as the ordinary Japanese... Some Japanese ethnologists favour the theory that the Yamato came from Central Asia” (pp. xi-xii). Indeed, perhaps they came all the way from Asia Minor.

In the end time, the peoples of Tarshish—encompassing perhaps the Spanish-Latin American world in the west and Japan in the east (each of which has had a great commercial tradition in modern times in its own right)—will merely be merchants for the much greater system of Tyre or Babylon that will dominate the globe (see verse 12).

Tubal, Meshech and Togarmah (verses 13-14) in ancient times dwelt near the Black Sea. Today, as we will later see in our examination of Ezekiel 38-39, these peoples may be found in central, western and eastern Russia respectively. The bartering of human lives mentioned in 27:13 parallels a similar statement about end-time slave trade in Revelation 18:13.

Even Israel and Judah are shown participating in the Tyrian marketplace before their downfall (Ezekiel 27:17). This was true in the ancient world and will come to pass again at the end of this age.

In verse 19, the Israelite tribe of Dan is associated with Javan or Greece, likely because the Danites for a time settled in Greece and plied the seas with the ancient Phoenicians and

Greeks (see "Appendix 2: Were the Greeks Israelites? our online publication *The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future* at <http://www.ucg.org/brp/materials/throne/appendices/ap2.html>.) Dan today may be found in Ireland and Denmark. Yet, as part of the European Union, they are once more associated with Greece—"traversing back and forth" as they are located on opposite ends of the European continent.

Areas of the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Jordan, Mesopotamia (southeast Turkey and Iraq) and Iran are also shown as participating in this system (verses 15-18, 20-24).

Verse 26 shows the overloaded ship of Tyre broken by "the east wind." The Nelson Study Bible notes on this verse: "The east wind was often powerful and potentially destructive (see Gen. 41:6; Job 27:21; Ps. 48:7 [where God says He breaks the merchant ships of Tarshish with an east wind]; Is. 27:8). Thus, it symbolizes the destruction the [ancient] Babylonian army [from the east] would bring on Tyre. In 26:7, Babylon would come from the 'north.' This was the direction from which the army would invade Phoenicia." In the end time, a great wave of destruction will come on the European empire from forces from the east (see Revelation 9:13-19). And ultimate destruction will come when Jesus Christ returns "as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west" (Matthew 24:27).

As great as it is, the ship of Tyre will ultimately sink—meaning the demise of both ancient Tyre and the future global power bloc it represents. In the description of its finery and vast wealth along with what is to befall it is a lesson for everyone, especially when we consider that, in a broader sense, Babylon—and so Tyre as well—is representative of mankind's entire corrupt civilization. The Bible Reader's Companion states in its note on chapter 27: "The extended metaphor in this poetic description of Tyre and her fall is one of the most powerful to be found in ancient or modern literature. The funeral dirge sums up the world's preoccupation with material wealth and prosperity and the pride success breeds. The sudden sinking of the ship not only portrays the demise of Tyre, but the vulnerability of all material possessions to destruction. The last two verses particularly display the anguish of those who pin their hopes on things—only to see them suddenly, irretrievably, gone."

Tyre's Human Ruler and the Power Behind the Throne (Ezekiel 28)

Having foretold, at God's direction, the destruction of Tyre in chapters 26 and proclaiming a lament or dirge over it in chapter 27, Ezekiel in chapter 28 now relays God's word concerning the "prince," or "ruler" (NIV), of Tyre (verses 1-10). The Expositor's Bible Commentary suggests that the reference on one level is to "Ittobaal II of those days [of the Babylonian conquest], though the speech is in many ways not against any one particular king but Tyre's kings per se" (note on verses 1-5).

Expositor's goes on to comment in its note on the same passage: "Tyre's king is described as a very wise man. Through his wisdom and insight in commercial sea-trade, he was able to amass

Tyre's great abundance of wealth (vv. 4-5; cf. ch. 27). However, the accumulation of riches and its accompanying splendor and importance created a haughty pride in this ruler (v. 5b; cf. 27:3). He was so impressed with himself that he actually began to think that he was a god—perhaps even El, the chief deity of the Canaanite pantheon (v. 2). Ancient Near Eastern thought often viewed the king as the embodiment of the god(s)... He was sitting on the 'throne of a god in the heart of the seas' [NIV]. Most likely Tyre's well-known, magnificent temple of Melkart, Tyre's patron deity, was in the prophet's mind. It was not uncommon for a city or a temple to be called the throne of a god, even in the O[ld] T[estament] (cf. Ps 132:13-14; Jer 3:17 et al.). On ancient bas-reliefs of Tyre, the city and its temple are seen projecting high out of the surrounding sea."

This kind of thinking will likely also characterize the ruler of end-time Tyre or Babylon, a powerful dictator referred to in the book of Revelation as "the Beast" (a name that also applies to his empire). Consider that Adolf Hitler, a ruler in this tradition and forerunner of the final dictator, saw himself as a superhuman messianic figure who would reign over a "Thousand Year Reich."

Returning to the passage, mention is again made in Ezekiel's book of the prophet Daniel (28:3; compare 14:14), showing that Daniel was already famous for his wisdom while he lived. This, of course, helps support the authenticity of Daniel's book as a product of the sixth century B.C., a fact many now seek to deny. In the King James and New King James Versions of Ezekiel 28:3, it is stated that the Tyrian ruler is wiser than Daniel. This could be a sarcastic statement. But notice the NIV translation, which gives this as a question: "Are you wiser than Daniel? Is no secret hidden from you?"

Clearly this ruler is not as wise as he thinks. He sees himself as a god when he is, in fact, just a man—and a man who will be humbled for his supreme arrogance by the true God. Strangers will invade and devastate his land, and he will die at the hands of aliens or foreigners (verses 7, 10). This applied to the ruler of ancient time. But it is also the fate of the end-time Beast ruler. His European empire will be devastated by a ruthless wave of invasion from the east (Revelation 9:13-19). And he himself will be slain in the ultimate "alien" invasion—at the coming of Jesus Christ and His saints (verses 19-21), who were strangers and foreigners in this world and will certainly be seen as foreigners from the vantage point of this "uncircumcised" ruler (see Ezekiel 28:10).

God then tells Ezekiel to take up a lamentation for the "king" of Tyre (verses 11-19). Though a large number of scholars argue that the poetic imagery of this passage merely emphasizes the downfall of the Tyrian ruler given in the beginning of the chapter, "many take the shift from 'ruler' to 'king' to indicate a shift of prophetic focus from a literal [human] ruler to a being he typifies, Satan" (Bible Reader's Companion, chapters 27-28 summary).

The latter interpretation becomes especially compelling when we consider the specific descriptions in the lament. Notice these points from The Bible Reader's Companion:

“(1) The description ‘model of perfection’ [NIV], and ‘blameless...from the day I created you’ seems an inappropriate description of any human ruler.

“(2) ‘Eden, the garden of God’ is described as the gem-filled center of earthly rule, and is taken as the province of Satan before Adam’s creation. [It could also refer to the heavenly paradise of God, especially given the mention of this being walking among the fiery gems ‘on the holy mountain of God,’ signifying the place of God’s throne.]

“(3) ‘A guardian cherub’ [(NIV) or ‘anointed cherub who covers’ (NKJV)] again is hardly an appropriate description of a pagan king. But it would fit Satan’s pre-fall role as an important angelic being [being evidently one of the two cherubim whose wings overshadowed the throne of God, as represented in the earthly copy of God’s throne, the mercy seat above the Ark of the Covenant].

“(4) ‘Till wickedness was found in you’ does not fit the [fact that no human beings are sinless] ...but seems to indicate a specific act of sin which corrupted the being described. “(5) ‘I expelled you...I threw you to earth’ [NIV] seems to fit Christ’s words about Satan’s expulsion from heaven, as recorded in Luke 10:18. While these same verses admit metaphorical and poetic interpretation references to the human rulers of Tyre, those who see Satan in this passage believe they are more appropriately rooted to him” (note on verses 1119).

It is most fascinating to consider that the patron God of ancient Tyre was Melkart. This name means “king of the city” (Expositor’s, note on verse 13a). His great temple in Tyre was seen as his throne, as earlier mentioned. So, the “king” of Tyre that God addresses would naturally seem to be the false god Melkart. Consider that a false god could represent an actual demonic power. The apostle Paul said of pagan temple sacrifices, “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God” (1 Corinthians 10:20). And Scripture makes it clear that demonic forces are the real rulers of this world (Ephesians 6:12; Daniel 10:10-21), with Satan the devil as the chief ruler or king of this world, the “god of this age” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

Satan, then, is the real power behind the throne—of both ancient and future Tyre. Ezekiel 28, then, is parallel to Isaiah 14, which addresses the human ruler of Babylon (both ancient and future) as well as the ultimate spirit ruler of Babylon, Satan. (Readers may wish to review that passage and the Bible Reading Program’s comments on it in context of the current reading.) The lament over the king of Tyre probably does refer to the human ruler in a metaphoric sense—but the primary reference is to Satan. Consider that Satan may actually possess the Beast dictator at times (as seems to have occurred on a few occasions with Hitler). So, there could actually be a blending of personalities. Even short of actual possession, there will clearly be evil spiritual influence. The supreme arrogance and blasphemy of the human ruler, of both ancient and end-time Tyre, ultimately comes from Satan—“the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). (To learn more about the powerful evil spirit who dominates the present age, send for or download our free booklet *Is There Really a Devil?*)

In the next section of Ezekiel 28, God pronounces judgment on Sidon (verses 20-24). Sidon was a sister city to Tyre. In fact, Tyre began as a colony of Sidon. The name Sidon is mentioned in the table of nations in Genesis 10 as the firstborn son of Canaan (verse 15). Thus, it may be that Sidon is used in Ezekiel 28 to portray the Phoenician people generally— with Tyre as the political, economic and religious power that has sprung up from among them. Recall that many of the Phoenicians today, along with the modern Babylonians, are scattered throughout southern Europe. Sidon was also the origin of Canaanite idolatry, which so infected the Israelites over the centuries—and this could be another reason it is singled out for special mention.

The chapter ends with God's promise to return the Israelites to their land. Expositor's states in its note on verses 25-26: "The judgment of the nations around Israel was given to encourage the exiles that God would faithfully exercise his righteousness against the nations as well as Judah. Ezekiel encouraged the Judeans further with a reminder that the Lord would regather them from among all the nations where they had been scattered by God's judgment. This restoration to Palestine would take place when God executed his judgments on the nations, judgments that would not be completed fully till the end times. By regathering Israel God would demonstrate to all nations that he was the holy God, unique and distinct. None of man's proposed deities had ever been able to accomplish a restoration such as this, and they never would; for the Lord alone was God and none other."

1 Peter 3

Verse 1. Ye wives, be in subjection] Consider that your husband is, by God's appointment, the head and ruler of the house; do not, therefore, attempt to usurp his government; for even though he obey not the word – his rule is not thereby impaired; and your affectionate, obedient conduct will be the most likely means of convincing him of the truth of the doctrine which you have received.

Without the word] That your holy conduct may be the means of begetting in them a reverence for the faith, the preaching of which they will not hear.

Verse 2. Chaste conversation-with fear.] While they see that ye join modesty, chastity, and the purest manners, to the fear of God. Or perhaps fear, fobov, is taken, as in Eph. v. 33, for the reverence due to the husband.

Verse 3. Whose adorning] kosmov. 1, where the word kosmov, world or ornament, is defined; and also, the note on Gen. ii. 1.

Plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold] Plaiting the hair, and variously folding it about the head, was the most ancient and most simple mode of disposing of this chief ornament of the female head. It was practiced anciently in every part of the east, and is so to the present day in India, in China, and also in Barbary. It was also prevalent among the Greeks and Romans, as ancient gems, busts, and statues, still remaining, sufficiently declare. We have a remarkable instance of the plaiting of the hair in a statue of Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, an exact representation of

which may be seen in a work of Andre Lens, entitled *Leviticus Costume de Peuple de l' Antiquite*, pl. 33. Many plates in the same work show the different modes of dressing the hair which obtained among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, and other nations. Thin plates of gold were often mixed with the hair, to make it appear more ornamental by the reflection of light and of the solar rays. Small golden buckles were also used in different parts; and among the Roman ladies, pearls and precious stones of different colours. Pliny assures us, *Hist. Nat.*, l. ix. c. 35, that these latter ornaments were not introduced among the Roman women till the time of Sylla, about 110 years before the Christian era. But it is evident, from many remaining monuments, that in numerous cases the hair differently plaited and curled was the only ornament of the head. Often a simple pin, sometimes of ivory, pointed with gold, seemed to connect the plaits. In monuments of antiquity the heads of the married and single women may be known, the former by the hair being parted from the forehead over the middle of the top of the head, the latter by being quite close, or being plaited and curled all in a general mass.

There is a remarkable passage in Plutarch, *Conjugalia Praecept.*, c. xxvi., very like that in the text: *kosmov gar estin, wv elege krathv, to kosmoun? kosmei de to kosmiwteran gunaika poioun? poiei de tauthn ou crusov, oute smaragdov, oute kokkov, all? osa semnothtov, eutaxiav, aidouv emfasin peritiqhsin?* Opera a Wyttenb., vol. i., page 390. "An ornament, as Crates said, is that which adorns. The proper ornament of a woman is that which becomes her best.

This is neither gold, nor pearls, nor scarlet; but those things which are an evident proof of gravity, regularity, and modesty." The wife of Phocion, a celebrated Athenian general, receiving a visit from a lady who was elegantly adorned with gold and jewels, and her hair with pearls, took occasion to call the attention of her guest to the elegance and costliness of her dress, remarking at the same time, "My ornament is my husband, now for the twentieth year general of the Athenians." *Plut.*, in *vit. Phoc.* How few women act this part! Women are in general at as much pains and cost in their dress, as if by it they were to be recommended both to God and man. It is, however, in every case, the argument either of a shallow mind, or of a vain and corrupted heart.

Verse 4. The hidden man of the heart] *?o kruptov thv kardia v anqrwpov*. This phrase is of the same import with that of St. Paul, *Rom. vii. 22*, *o esw anqrwpov*, the inner man; that is, the soul, with the whole system of affections and passions. Every part of the Scripture treats man as a compound being: the body is the outward or visible man; the soul, the inward, hidden, or invisible man.

A meek and quiet spirit] That is, a mind that will not give provocation to others, nor receive irritation by the provocation of others. Meekness will prevent the first; quietness will guard against the last.

Great price.] All the ornaments placed on the head and body of the most illustrious female, are, in the sight of God, of no worth; but a meek and silent spirit are, in his sight, invaluable, because

proceeding from and leading to himself, being incorruptible, surviving the ruins of the body and the ruins of time, and enduring eternally.

Verse 5. For after this manner] Simplicity reigned in primitive times; natural ornaments alone were then in use. Trade and commerce brought in luxuries; and luxury brought pride, and all the excessive nonsense of DRESS.

Who trusted in God] The women who trust NOT in God are fond of dress and frippery; those who trust in God follow nature and common sense.

Being in subjection unto their own husbands]

Verse 6. Even as Sarah obeyed] Gen. xviii. 12: And my lord is old." The words of the apostle imply that she acknowledged his superiority, and her own subjection to him, in the order of God. Whose daughters ye are] As Abraham is represented the father of all his male believing descendants, so Sarah is represented as the mother of all her believing female posterity. A son of Abraham is a true believer; a daughter of Sarah is the same.

As long as ye do well] For you cannot maintain your relationship to her longer than ye believe; and ye cannot believe longer than ye continue to obey.

And are not afraid with any amazement.] It is difficult to extract any sense out of this clause. The original is not very easy; mh foboumenai mhdemian ptohsiv may be rendered, And not fearing with any terror. If ye do well, and act conscientiously your part as faithful wives, ye will at no time live under the distressing apprehension of being found out, or terrified at every appearance of the discovery of infidelities, or improper conduct. Being not guilty of these, you will not have occasion to fear detection.

Verse 7. Dwell with them according to knowledge] Give your wives, by no species of unkind carriage, any excuse for delinquency. How can a man expect his wife to be faithful to him, if he be unfaithful to her? and vice versa.

Giving honour unto the wife] Using your superior strength and experience in her behalf, and thus honouring her by becoming her protector and support. But the word timh honour, signifies maintenance as well as respect;-maintain, provide for the wife.

As-the weaker vessel] Being made delicately, and consequently more slenderly, constructed. Roughness and strength go hand in hand; so likewise do beauty and frailty. The female has what the man wants-beauty and delicacy. The male has what the female wants-courage and strength.

The one is as good in its place as the other: and by these things God has made an equality between the man and the woman, so that there is properly very little superiority on either side. See the note on 1 Thess. iv. 4.

Being heirs together] Both the man and woman being equally called to eternal glory: and as prayer is one great means of obtaining a meetness for it, it is necessary that they should live together in such a manner as to prevent all family contentions, that they may not be prevented,

by disputes or misunderstandings, from uniting daily in this most important duty-family and social prayer.

Verse 8. Be ye all of one mind] Unity, both in the family and in the Assembly, being essentially necessary to peace and salvation. See on Rom. xii. 16; xv. 5.

Having compassion] Being sympathetic; feeling for each other; bearing each other's burdens.

Love as brethren] Be lovers of the brethren.

Pitiful] Tender-hearted; let your bowels yearn over the distressed and afflicted.

Courteous] Be friendly-minded; acquire and cultivate a friendly disposition. But instead of this word, tapeinofronev, be humble-minded, is the reading of ABC, more than twenty others, with the Syriac, Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, and some of the fathers. This is probably the true reading, and Griesbach has admitted it into the text.

Verse 9. Not rendering evil for evil] Purposing, saying, doing nothing but good; and invariably returning good for evil.

Ye are thereunto called] This is your calling – your business in life, to do good, and to do good for evil, and to implore God's blessing even on your worst enemies. And this is not only your duty, but your interest; for in so doing you shall obtain God's blessing, even life for evermore.

Verse 10. For he that will love life] He who wishes to live long and prosperously, must act as he is here directed. 1. He must refrain from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering. 2. He must avoid flattery and fair speeches, which cover hypocritical or wicked intentions. 3. He must avoid evil, keep going away from evil. 4. He must do good; he must walk in the way of righteousness. 5. He must live peaceably with all men; seek peace where it has been lost; restore it where it has been broken; and pursue it where it seems to be flying away. He who lives thus must live happy in himself. And as excess in action and passion always tends to the shortening of life, and nothing preys on the constitution more than disorderly passions, he must live not only happiest but longest who avoids them.

Verse 12. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous] That is, He is continually under God's notice and his care; God continually watches for him and watches over him, and he is under his constant protection.

And his ears are open unto their prayers] The original is very emphatic: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears to their prayers.

The righteous man ever attracts the Divine notice, and wherever he is, there is the ear of God; for, as every righteous man is a man of prayer, wherever he prays, there is the ear of God, into which the prayer, as soon as formed, enters.

But the face of the Lord] Far from his eye being upon them, or his ear open to their requests, (for prayer they have none,) his face, his approbation, his providence and blessing, are turned away from them; and he only looks upon them to abhor them, and to turn the arm of his justice against them.

Verse 13. Who is he that will harm you] Is it possible that a man can be wretched who has God for his friend? "All the devices which the devil or wicked men work against such must be brought to naught, and by the providence of his goodness be dispersed." If ye be followers, &c.] ean tou agaou mimhtai genhsqe? If ye be imitators of the good One, i.e. of God. ?o agaov, the good One, is one of God's prime epithets, see Matt. xix. 17, and Satan is distinguished by the reverse, o ponhrov, the EVIL one, Matthew xiii. 19, where see the notes. Instead of mimhtai, followers, or rather imitators, zhltai, zealous of what is good, is the reading of ABC, fifteen others, both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian and Vulgate, with some of the fathers. This is a very probable reading, and Griesbach has placed it in the margin as a candidate for the place of that in the text. Verse 14. But and if ye suffer] God may permit you to be tried and persecuted for righteousness' sake, but this cannot essentially harm you; he will press even this into your service, and make it work for your good.

Happy are ye] This seems to refer to Matt. v. 10, &c. Blessed or happy, are ye when men persecute you, &c. It is a happiness to suffer for Messiah; and it is a happiness, because if a man were not holy and righteous the world would not persecute him, so he is happy in the very cause of his sufferings.

Be not afraid of their terror] ton de fobon autwn mh fobhqhte? Fear not their fear; see Isa. viii. 12. Sometimes fear is put for the object of a man's religious worship; see Gen. xxxi. 42; Proverbs i. 26, and the place in Isaiah just quoted. The exhortation may mean, Fear not their gods, they can do you no hurt; and supposing that they curse you by them, yet be not troubled; "He who fears God need have no other fear."

Verse 15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts] To sanctify God may signify to offer him the praises due to his grace, but as to sanctify literally signifies to make holy, it is impossible that God should be thus sanctified.

We have often already seen that agiazw signifies to separate from earth, that is, from any common use or purpose, that the thing or person thus separated may be devoted to a sacred use. Perhaps we should understand Peter's words thus: Entertain just notions of God; of his nature, power, will, justice, goodness, and truth. Do not conceive of him as being actuated by such passions as men; separate him in your hearts from everything earthly, human, fickle, rigidly severe, or capriciously merciful. Consider that he can neither be like man, feel like man, nor act like man. Ascribe no human passions to him, for this would desecrate not sanctify him. Do not confine him in your conceptions to place, space, vacuity, heaven, or earth; endeavour to think worthily of the immensity and eternity of his nature, of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Avoid the error of the heathens, who bound even their Dii Majores, their greatest gods, by fate, as many well-meaning believers do the true God by decrees; conceive of him as infinitely free to act or not act, as he pleases. Consider the goodness of his nature; for goodness, in every possible state of perfection and infinitude, belongs to him. Ascribe no malevolence to him; nor any work, purpose, or decree, that implies it: this is not only a human passion, but a passion of fallen man. Do not suppose that he can do evil, or that he can destroy when he might save; that he ever did, or ever can, hate any of those whom he made in his own

image and in his own likeness, so as by a positive decree to doom them, unborn, to everlasting perdition, or, what is of the same import, pass them by without affording them the means of salvation, and consequently rendering it impossible for them to be saved.

Thus, endeavour to conceive of him; and, by so doing, you separate him from all that is imperfect, human, evil, capricious, changeable, and unkind.

Ever remember that he has wisdom without error, power, without limits, truth without falsity, love without hatred, holiness without evil, and justice without rigour or severity on the one hand, or capricious tenderness on the other. In a word, that he neither can be, say, purpose, or do, any thing that is not infinitely just, holy, wise, true, and gracious; that he hates nothing that he has made; and has so loved the world, the whole human race, as to give his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. Thus sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and you will ever be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you to every serious and candid inquirer after truth. Most religious systems and creeds are incapable of rational explanation, because founded on some misconception of the Divine nature. "They set at odds heaven's jarring attributes, And with one excellence another wound." The system of humanizing God, and making him, by our unjust conceptions of him, to act as ourselves would in certain circumstances, has been the bane of both religion and piety; and on this ground infidels have laughed us to scorn. It is high time that we should no longer know God after the flesh; for even if we have known Jesus Christ after the flesh, we are to know him so no more.

What I have written above is not against any particular creed of religious people, it is against any or all to whom it may justly apply, it may even be against some portions of my own; for even in this respect I am obliged daily to labour to sanctify the Lord God in my heart, to abstract him from everything earthly and human, and apprehend him as far as possible in his own essential nature and attributes through the light of his Spirit and the medium of his own revelation. To act thus requires no common effort of soul: and just apprehensions of this kind are not acquired without much prayer, much self-reflection, much time, and much of the grace and mercy of God.

A reason of the hope] An account of your hope of the resurrection of the dead and eternal life in God's glory. This was the great object of their hope, as Christ was the grand object of their faith. With meekness and fear] Several excellent MSS. add the word *alla*, but, here, and it improves the sense considerably: Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, BUT with meekness and fear. Do not permit your readiness to answer, nor the confidence you have in the goodness of your cause, to lead you to answer pertly or superciliously to any person; defend the truth with all possible gentleness and fear, lest while you are doing it you should forget his presence whose cause you support, or say anything unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the religion which you have espoused, or inconsistent with that heavenly temper which the Spirit of your indwelling Lord must infallibly produce.

Verse 16. Having a good conscience] The testimony of God in your own soul, that in simplicity and godly sincerity you have your conversation in the world. See on the term conscience at the end of Hebrews.

Whereas they speak evil of you]

Verse 17. For it is better]

Verse 18. Christ also hath once suffered]

Put to death in the flesh] In his human nature.

But quickened by the Spirit] That very dead body revived by the power of his Divinity. There are various opinions on the meaning of this verse, with which I need not trouble the reader, as I have produced that which is most likely.

Verse 19. By which] Spirit, his own Divine energy and authority.

He went and preached] By the ministry of Noah, one hundred and twenty years. Unto the spirits in prison]

Verse 20. When once the long-suffering of God waited] In Pirkey Aboth, cap. v. 2, we have these words: "There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, that the long-suffering of God might appear; for each of these generations provoked him to anger, and went on in their iniquity, till at last the deluge came." Were saved by water.] While the ark was preparing, only Noah's family believed; these amounted to eight persons; and these only were saved from the deluge di uoatov, on the water: all the rest perished in the water; though many of them, while the rains descended, and the waters daily increased, did undoubtedly humble themselves before God, call for mercy, and receive it; but as they had not repented at the preaching of Noah, and the ark was now closed, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, they lost their lives, though God might have extended mercy to their souls.

Verse 21. The like figure whereunto, now saveth us also, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are many difficulties in this verse; but the simple meaning of the place may be easily apprehended. Noah believed in God; walked uprightly before him, and found grace in his sight; he obeyed him in building the ark, and God made it the means of his salvation from the waters of the deluge.

Verse 22. Who is gone into heaven] Having given the fullest proof of his resurrection from the dead, and of his having accomplished the end for which he came into the world. On the right hand of God] In the place of the highest dignity, honour, and influence.

Angels and authorities and powers] That is, all creatures and beings, both in the heavens and in the earth, are put under subjection to Yeshua.

He has all power in the heavens and in the earth. He alone can save; and he alone can destroy. None need fear who put their trust in him, as he can do whatsoever he will in behalf of his followers, and has good and evil spirits under his absolute command. Well may his enemies tremble, while his friends exult and sing. He can raise the dead, and save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father through him.

If he have all power, if angels and authorities and powers be subject to him, then he can do what he will, and employ whom he will. To raise the dead can be no difficulty to him, because he has power over all things. He created the world; he can destroy it, and he can create it anew. We can conceive nothing too difficult for Omnipotence. This same omnipotent Being is the friend of man. Why then do we not come to him with confidence, and expect the utmost salvation of which our souls and bodies are capable?

1 Peter 4

Verse 1. As Christ hath suffered] He is your proper pattern; have the same disposition he had; the same forgiving spirit, with meekness, gentleness, and complete self-possession.

He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin] This is a general maxim, if understood literally: The man who suffers generally reflects on his ways, is humbled, fears approaching death, loathes himself because of his past iniquities, and ceases from them; for, in a state of suffering, the mind loses its relish for the sins of the flesh, because they are embittered to him through the apprehension which he has of death and judgment; and, on his application to God's mercy, he is delivered from his sin.

Verse 2. That he no longer should live-in the flesh] Governed by the base principle of giving up his faith to save his life; to the lusts of men – according to the will of his idolatrous persecutors; but to the will of God; which will of God is, that he should retain the truth, and live according to its dictates, though he should suffer for it.

Verse 3. The time past of our life] This is a complete epitome of the Gentile or heathen state, and a proof that those had been Gentiles to whom the apostle wrote.

1. They walked in lasciviousness, en aselgeiaiv? every species of lechery, lewdness, and impurity.
2. In lusts, epiqumiaiv? strong irregular appetites, and desires of all kinds.
3. In excess of wine, oinoflugiaiv? wine, and fluw, to be hot, or to boil; to be inflamed with wine; they were in continual debauches.
4. In revellings, kwmoiv? lascivious feastings, with drunken songs
5. In banquetings, potoiv? wine feasts, drinking matches, &c.
6. In abominable idolatries, aqemitoiv eidwlolatreaiv? that is, the abominations practiced at their idol feasts, where they not only worshipped the idol, but did it with the most impure, obscene, and abominable rites. This was the general state of the Gentile world; and with this monstrous wickedness believers had everywhere to struggle.

Verse 4. They think it strange] xenizontai? They wonder and are astonished at you, that ye can renounce these gratifications of the flesh for a spiritual something, the good of which they cannot see.

Excess of riot] aswtiav anacusin? Flood of profligacy; bearing down all rule, order, and restraints before it.

Speaking evil of you] blasphemous? Literally, blaspheming; i.e. speaking impiously against God, and calumniously of you.

Verse 5. To judge the quick and the dead.] They shall give account of these irregularities to Him who is prepared to judge both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles, previously to the preaching of the Gospel among them, were reckoned to be dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1-5; under the sentence of death, because they had sinned. The Jews had at least, by their religious profession, a name to live; and by that profession were bound to give to God.

Verse 6. Was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead] There are as many different translations of this verse, and comments upon it, as there are translators and commentators.

Verse 7. But the end of all things is at hand] I think that here also St. Peter keeps the history of the deluge before his eyes, finding a parallel to the state of the Jews in his own time in that of the antediluvians in the days of Noah. In Gen. vi. 13, God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me. This was spoken at a time when God had decreed the destruction of the world by a flood.

In a very few years after St. Peter wrote this epistle, even taking it at the lowest computation, viz., A. D. 60 or 61, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. To this destruction, which was literally then at hand, the apostle alludes when he says, The end of all things is at hand; the end of the temple, the end of the Levitical priesthood, the end of the whole Jewish economy, was then at hand.

If these words could be taken in any general sense, then we might say to every present generation, The end of all things is at hand; the end of all the good which the wicked enjoy, and the end of all the evil which the righteous suffer.

Be-sober, and watch unto prayer.] Be sober – make a prudent and moderate use of all you possess; and watch against all occasions of sin; and pray for the supporting hand of God to be upon you for good, that ye may escape the destruction that is coming upon the world, and that ye may be saved from among them when the scourge comes.

Verse 8. Have fervent charity] agaphn ektenh? Intense love; for love shall cover a multitude of sins. A loving disposition leads us to pass by the faults of others, to forgive offenses against ourselves, and to excuse and lessen, as far as is consistent with truth, the transgressions of men. It does not mean that our love to others will induce God to pardon our offenses. See the note on James v. 20.

Verse 9. Use hospitality] Be ever ready to divide your bread with the hungry, and to succour the stranger.

Without grudging.] aneu gaggusmwn? Without grumblings. Do nothing merely because it is commanded, but do it from love to God and man; then it will be without grumbling.

Verse 10. Hath received the gift] carisma? A gift; any blessing of providence or grace. I cannot think that the word means here the Holy Spirit, or any of his supernatural gifts or influences; it may

include those, but it signifies anything given by the mere mercy and bounty of God: but perhaps in this place it may signify some or any office in the Assembly; and this sense, indeed, the connection seems to require.

Stewards of the manifold grace] Whatever gifts or endowments any man may possess, they are properly speaking, not his own; they are the Lord's property, and to be employed in his work, and to promote his glory.

Verse 11. If any man speak] In order to explain or enforce God's word, and edify his neighbor, let him do it as those did to whom the living oracles were committed: they spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Of the ability which God giveth] Perhaps the ministering here may refer to the care of the poor, and the ability is the quantum of means which God may have placed in their hands; and they are to minister this as coming immediately from God, and lead the minds of the poor to consider him as their benefactor, that he in all things may be glorified through Yeshua.

This is implied in the essence of any charitable act: the actor is not the author, God is the author; and the poor man should be taught to consider him as his immediate benefactor. Those who give any thing as from themselves, rob God; for to him the praise for all good, and the dominion over all men and things, belong for ever and ever.

Verse 12. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial] purwsei? The burning.

St. Peter returns here to what he had often touched upon in this epistle, namely, to exhort the believers to behave with patience and integrity under their present severe persecution; to which purpose he uses the following arguments: - First, He intimates that it was not a strange or unusual thing for the people of God to be persecuted.

Secondly, That if they suffered here as Messiah did, they should hereafter be glorified with him. Thirdly, Besides the prospect of that future glory; they had at present the Spirit of God for their support and comfort.

Fourthly, That it was an honour for any of them to suffer, not as a malefactor, but as a believer.

Fifthly, Though the afflictions began with the believers, yet the weight of the storm would fall upon the unbelievers. From these considerations he exhorted them to persevere in their duty, and trust all events with God.

Verse 14. If ye be reproached for the name of Yeshua] To be reproached for the name of Messiah is to be reproached for being a believer, that is, for being like Messiah. This is the highest honour to which any man can arrive in this world, and therefore the apostle says to such? Happy are ye.

The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you] As this Divine Spirit rested upon Yeshua, so does it rest upon his persecuted followers.

On their part he is evil spoken of] kata men autouv blasfhmeitai, kata de umav doxazetai? By them he is blasphemed, by you he is honoured.

Verse 15. But let none of you suffer-as a busybody in other men's matters] allotrioepiskopov? The inspector of another; meddling with other people's concerns, and forgetting their own; such persons are hated of all men. But some think that meddling with those in public office is here intended, as if he had said: Meddle not with the affairs of state, leave public offices and public officers to their own master, strive to live peaceably with all men, and show yourselves to be humble and unassuming.

Verse 16. Yet if-as a believer] If he be persecuted because he has embraced the faith, let him not be ashamed, but let him rather glorify God on this very account.

Verse 17. Judgment must begin at the house of God] Our Lord had predicted that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, his own followers would have to endure various calamities; see Matt. xxiv. 9, 21, 22; Mark xiii. 12, 13; John xvi. 2, &c. Here his true disciples are called the house or family of God. That the converted Jews suffered much from their own brethren, the zealots, or factions into which the Jews were at that time divided, needs little proof; and some interpreters think that this was in conformity to the purpose of God, (Matt. xxiii. x25: That on you may come all the righteous blood shed from the foundation of the world,) "that the Jewish believers were to be involved in the general punishment; and that it was proper to begin at them as a part of the devoted Jewish nation, notwithstanding they were now become the house of God, because the justice of God would thereby be more illustriously displayed."

"God never punishes the world but because of the wicked, but he always begins with the righteous first. The destroyer makes no difference between the just and the unjust, only he begins first with the righteous." See Ezek. ix. 1-7, where God orders the destroyer to slay both old and young in the city: But, said he, begin at my sanctuary.

Verse 18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved] If it shall be with extreme difficulty that the Christians shall escape from Jerusalem, when the Roman armies shall come against it with the full commission to destroy it, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Where shall the proud Pharisaic boaster in his own outside holiness, and the profligate transgressor of the laws of God, show themselves, as having escaped the Divine vengeance?

Verse 19. Suffer according to the will of God] A man suffers according to the will of God who suffers for righteousness' sake; and who, being reviled, reviles not again.

Commit the keeping of their souls] Place their lives confidently in his hand, who, being their Creator, will also be their preserver, and keep that safely which is committed to his trust. God is here represented as faithful, because he will always fulfill his promises, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

But they had no reason to hope that he would care for their lives and souls unless they continued in well-doing. He who is employed in God's work will have God's protection. The path of duty ever was, and ever will be, the only way of safety.

THE apostle recommends fervent charity – unfeigned love both to God and man. It is well said of this grace that it is a universal virtue which ought to precede, accompany, and follow, all

others. A charity which has God for its principle, and Yeshua for its pattern, never faileth. If our charity be extensive enough to cover all the defects of our neighbour in bearing with them; that of God is sufficient to cover all the sins of a sincere penitent by blotting them out. If we ought to be charitable to all, it is after the example of our heavenly Father, who is loving to every man, and hateth nothing that he has made.

The difficulty of escaping the corruption that is in the world is great; and, consequently, the danger of losing our souls. In this great work, watchfulness, prayer; faith, and obedience, are indispensably necessary.

He who does not walk with God here cannot see nor enjoy him hereafter.