

MATAN AL HAPEREK

The Six-Year Online Weekly Tanach Learning Program



Perek 28

In perek 28 we find a series of prophecies. The first two prophecies deal with the leaders of Tyre. The first prophecy (1-10) turns to the "prince of Tyre" and focuses on the fact that his great wisdom which has caused him to have a proud heart will bring his downfall. The second prophecy (11-19) is a lamentation for the king of Tyre, which outlines his character in terms taken from the story of the Garden of Eden and the sin of Adam. In the continuation of the perek we find a prophecy of doom for Sidon, Tyre's neighbor, and a prophecy of consolation for Israel (20-26).

1 The prophecy about the prince of Tyre is divided into two parts: the sin (2-5) and the punishment (6-10).

a) The word "Heart" is used repeatedly in both parts. Follow its appearance in the description of the stages of the sin.

b) What are the factors which caused the prince of Tyre to have a proud heart? Pay attention to the different meanings of the word "heart". Use the **Radak** to understand:

I sit in the seat of God in the heart of the seas – For I sat in a strong place, because I was in the heart of the sea and the sea surrounded me, therefore no one could touch me – like God who sits in the heavens - and all the merchants of the people worshipped me.





See the description of Shlomo's wisdom in Melachim I 3:12, 28.

c) In the description of the punishment, the prince of Tyre has a reversal of fortune – see the contrasted parallelism between the sin and the punishment. Compare pesukim 8-9 with pasuk 2.

- 2 The second prophecy in the perek is a lamentation for the king of Tyre. The first half describes the ideal condition in which he is found – like a creature in the Garden of Eden (12-13) and a cherub on the mountain of God (14-15). The second half describes the sin and downfall of the king of Tyre. In both this prophecy and the previous one, the king is described as someone who enjoys unique virtues and excessive closeness with God. However the process in the two prophecies differs: pay attention to the differences in the sins – how does the sin stem from commerce ("*your trading*") in each prophecy (pesukim 5 and 16)? How is the closeness to God expressed in each prophecy (pesukim 2 and 14)? What type of punishment is described in each prophecy?
- 3 The background to the lamentation for the king of Tyre is the story of the Garden of Eden and the sin of Adam: Take note of the hints which lead us to the story of the Garden of Eden (Bereshit 2:8,12 and 3:23-24) and discuss how they add to our understanding of the sin of the king of Tyre in our prophecy.
- 4 "*So says the Lord God: When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples*" (25) While the whole perek has spoken about prophecies for the nations, at the end of the perek we find two pesukim which are a prophecy of consolation for Israel. What is their function here? Pay attention to the type of consolation in the pesukim, the role of the nations in it, and its verbal and literary connection to the prophecy before it (24, 26).



Perek 29

Perek 29 begins a series of prophecies about Pharaoh and Egypt which ends in perek 32. The perek includes two prophecies, both of which have dates: the first is from the tenth year, the year after the beginning of the siege on Jerusalem, and the second is from the twenty-seventh year. The first prophecy (1-15) begins by referring to the god-like pride of Pharaoh and his self-identification with the crocodile and the Nile River, the source of Egypt's strength. The punishment for this pride is that Egypt will become parched and disconnected from its source of life. The prophecy ends with a description of the exile of Egypt and its redemption. The second prophecy (16-21) deals with Tyre and Egypt – Egypt will be punished by Tyre, and will be looted by Nevuchadnezzar.

- 5 "Behold I am upon you, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great crocodile that lies down in the midst of its rivers"(3) The prophecy begins with a unique image and quote from Pharaoh. What is the perception reflected in the words of Pharaoh here? In order to understand the connection between crocodiles and the Nile River and the importance of the Nile River in Egypt read the **Malbim**:

The Egyptians believed that the Nile River was holy and that the large crocodiles in it were god-like, and that there was one great crocodile who ruled over all of the others and this great crocodile had created himself and the Nile River.



See also Cassuto in his commentary on Bereshit:

In all of the eastern countries there were various myths about the wars between the gods and the crocodiles and monsters... when the Torah tells us "And God created the great crocodiles" – it is as if to say to us: do not think that the crocodiles were mythological creatures who opposed God or rebelled against Him. They were natural creatures who were created by the word of God...

- 6 In Pesukim 6-9 the prophet turns to speak to the inhabitants of Egypt. Pay attention to the context of this section and to the content of the claim which appears here.
- 7 The root *sh.m.m.* occurs repeatedly in the perek, along with the root *ch.r.v.* These root words can be understood both as a place of destruction and as an arid place (see Yechezkel 30:12). Note this double meaning in the perek and see how it is connected to the punishment which Pharaoh and Egypt receive.

Appendix

"In Eden, the garden of God, you were"

"Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?" – Who is like you among those who call themselves gods? Pharaoh called himself a god, as it says *"My river is my own, and I have made it for myself"*, as well as Sancheriv... and Nevuchadnezzar... and the prince of Tyre, as it says, *"Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God; Because thy heart is lifted up..."* (Mechilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Massechta DeShira 8)

The prince of Tyre listed himself with the "greats" of the world who in their arrogance dared to call themselves gods. Tyre became an alternative



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to Jerusalem and its values. It saw itself as a god and became a center of pagan pride. Yechezkel describes the prince of Tyre using imagery from the story of the Garden of Eden: the garden of God, cherubs, trees, depths, rivers, gold, precious stones, onyx and crystals. Yechezkel uses many images of the Garden of Eden, even adding to the original Torah text. The stones mentioned are associated in the Torah with the countries which were surrounded by the rivers which came out of Eden. In Yechezkel's description we find the stones in the garden itself.. In Yechezkel's understanding, the Garden of Eden is not an event from the past, rather an important influence on the development of the present, through which the future will be built. Man was placed from the start in the Garden of Eden, and was expelled from there because of his sin. Since then, all the transformations in history have been an attempt to bring him back to the Garden of Eden... Tyre, also, was in the Garden of Eden and benefited from its good and received greatness from the Heavens, which were meant to be distributed to the world. However, Tyre embezzled this power, and used it for a completely different purpose. According to the Christian understanding, the Garden of Eden serves not man but God Himself. The prince of Tyre who saw himself as a god, took for himself the garden which was full of glory and delight, gold and precious stones. Adam, as well, wronged by taking the good God had granted him and using it for his own purposes and to fulfill his own desires, and so ruined and destroyed the world. So too, Tyre seized the good in the world and used it for its own purposes. Tyre's sin and pride destroyed it to the foundation, its commerce became full of cruelty and injustice and it was punished excessively, and like Adam, was expelled from the garden.

(Free translation of Y. Ariel, Lev Chadash – Iyunim beSefer Yechezkel, pp. 235-236)

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