



The Phoenicians

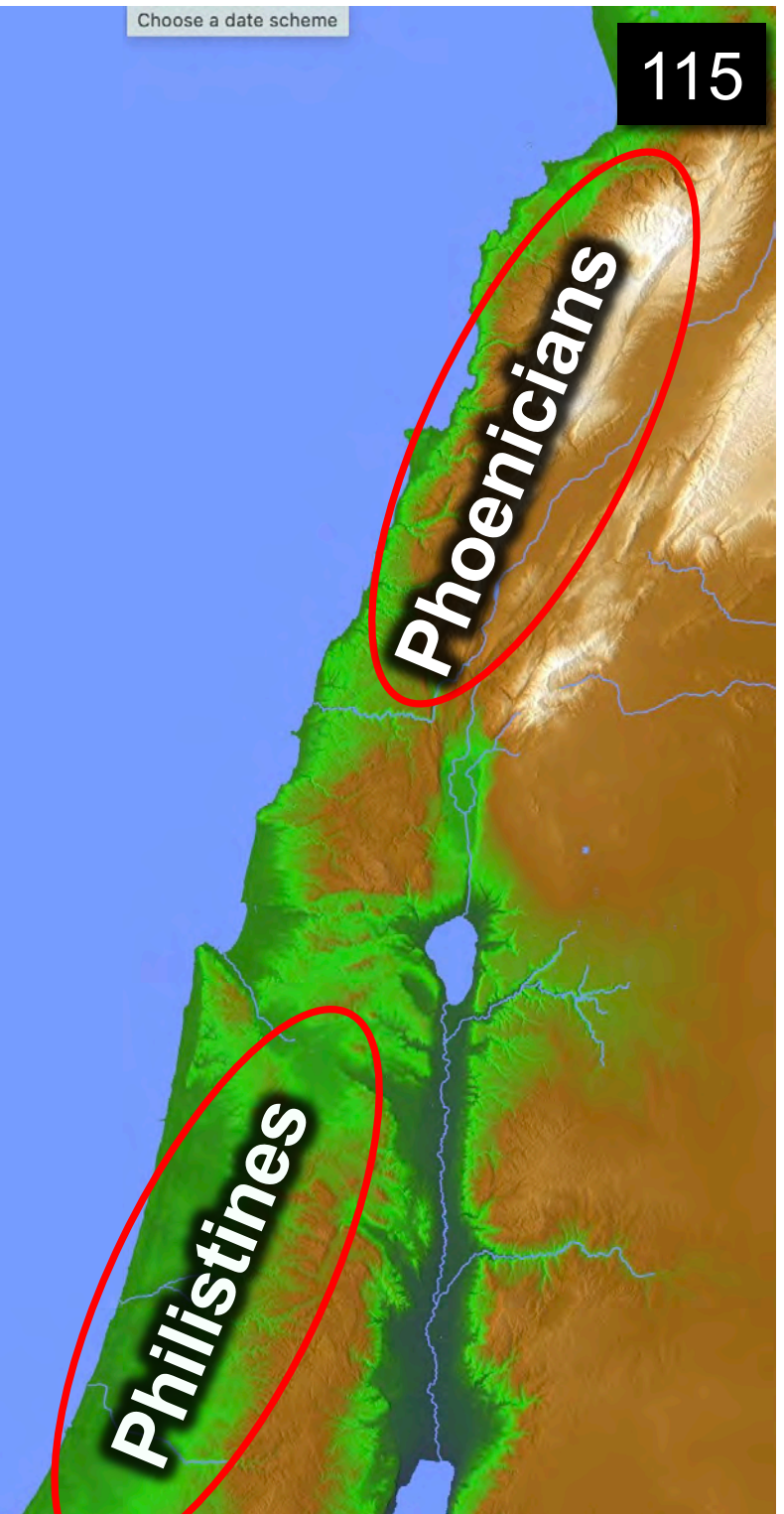
Dr. Rick Griffith • Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary • BibleStudyDownloads.org

Introduction

- ◇ Phoenicia – from Greek *phoinix* meaning purple red
- ◇ A mighty seaport
- ◇ Purposes: Gain better understanding
 - ✓ Relationship with Israel
 - ✓ Impact on the nations around them
 - ✓ Lessons we can learn from them

Introduction

- ◇ Israel was sandwiched between Phoenicia and Philistia
- ◇ "...those [nations] whom you let remain will become as *pricks* in your eyes and as *thorns* in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live" (Num. 33:55).



Geography of Phoenicia

- ◇ Strip of land between the Mediterranean Sea and mountains
- ◇ Fertile crops
- ◇ Heart of the region:
Tyre, Sidon and Byblos



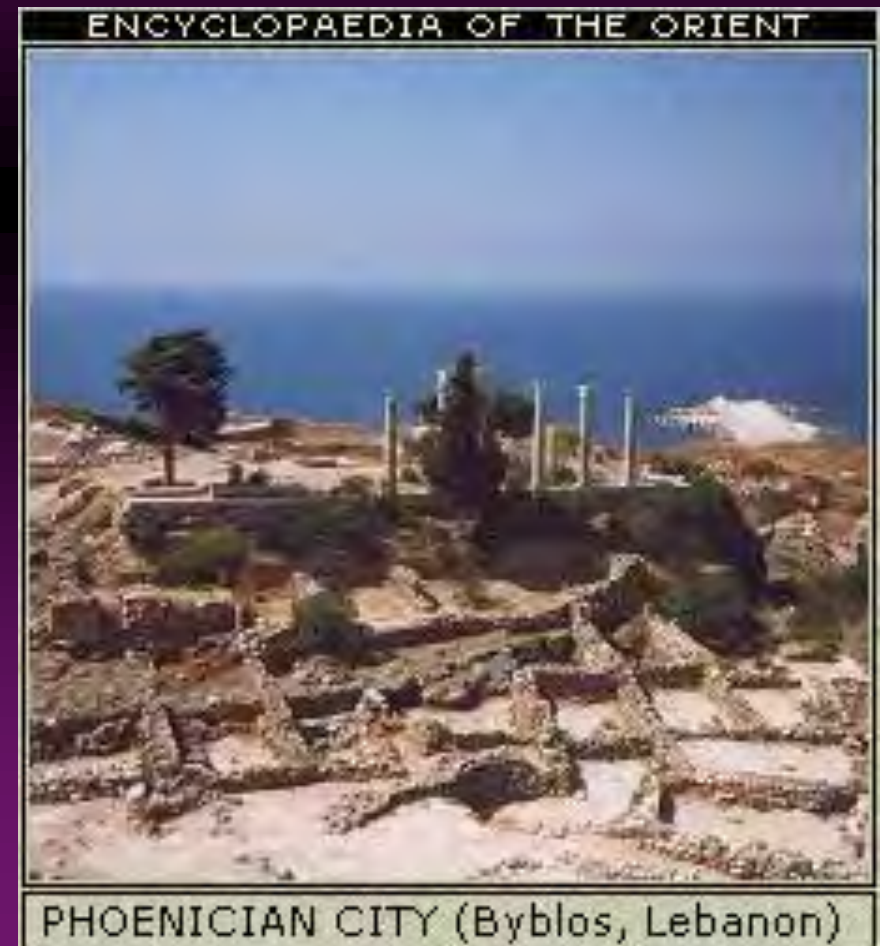


Cedar Trees on a Lebanon
Mountain

Ethnic Origin



- ◇ No clear origin
- ◇ Theory 1: from Persian Gulf as Sea Peoples
- ◇ Theory 2: descendants of people in the region
- ◇ Theory 3: Phoenician Semitic immigrants



History



- ◇ 3000 BC ⇒ First Phoenician settlement
- ◇ 1800 BC ⇒ Under Egyptian control
- ◇ 1600 BC ⇒ Trading with foreign cities
- ◇ 1400 BC ⇒ Under Hittite control
- ◇ 1200 BC ⇒ Independent & colonizing
- ◇ 800 BC ⇒ Under Assyrians
- ◇ 585 BC ⇒ Conquered by Nebuchadnezzar
- ◇ 332 BC ⇒ Conquered by Alexander
- ◇ 64 BC ⇒ Absorbed into Roman empire

Phoenician Coastal Plain

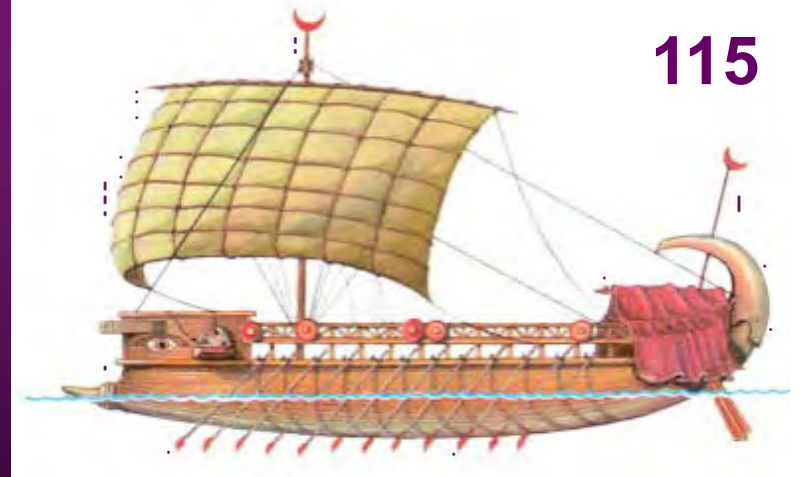
- Tyre



History

Two phases of history:

1. 1200 BC (advent of the Sea People) to 876 BC (initial Assyrian assault)
1. 876 BC to 332 BC (when Alexander destroyed Tyre)



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Social Classes

Societal Divisions

◇ Peasant class – a united community based on agriculture and fishing

◇ Urban class – specialized in economic activities & crafts



Trade of Tyre (Isaiah 23; Ezek 27)

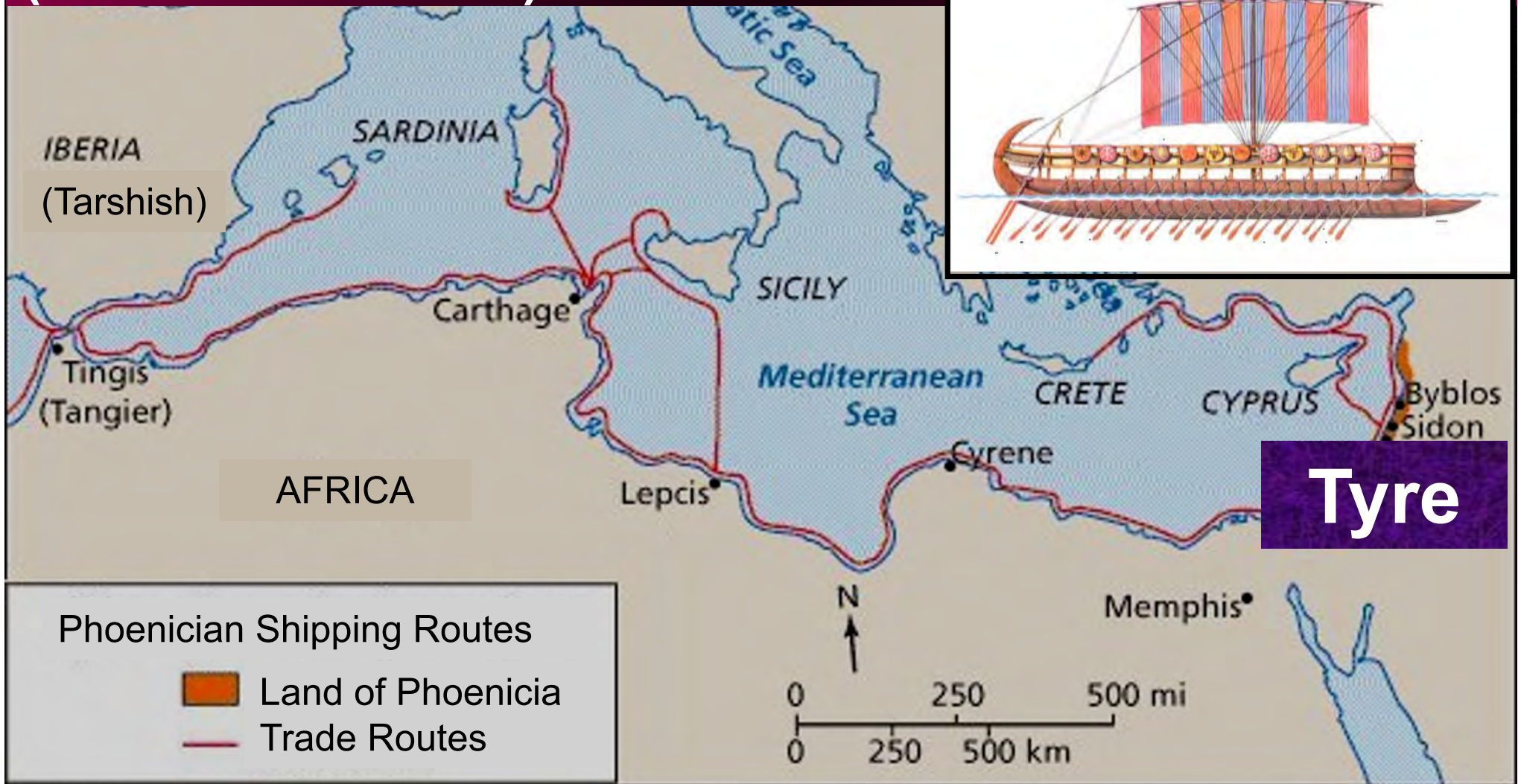
Imported raw materials from faraway countries and exported finished products:



- ◇ **Bronze** – exported to Assyria, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy
- ◇ **Ivory** – imported from Syria then exported finished products to the west
- ◇ Also **glass** workings, **wool** stuffs dyed in purple, etc.



"Tarshish sent merchants to buy your wares in exchange for silver, iron, tin, and lead. ¹³Merchants from Greece, Tubal, and Meshech brought slaves and articles of bronze to trade with you" (Ezekiel 27:12 NLT).



The Trade of Phoenicia

Commercially astute:
used trade treaties &
political alliances:



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- ◇ Trade with David (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1)
- ◇ King Hiram helped Solomon in building and overseas ventures
- ◇ Export of oil, wine and timber
- ◇ Called a harlot (Isa. 23:16-17)

Who was the King of Tyre (Isaiah 23)?



Tyrian coins

"Son of man, give the prince of Tyre this message from the Sovereign LORD:

'In your great pride, you claim, "I am a god! I sit on a divine throne in the heart of the sea." But you are only a man and not a god, though you boast that you are a god.'"



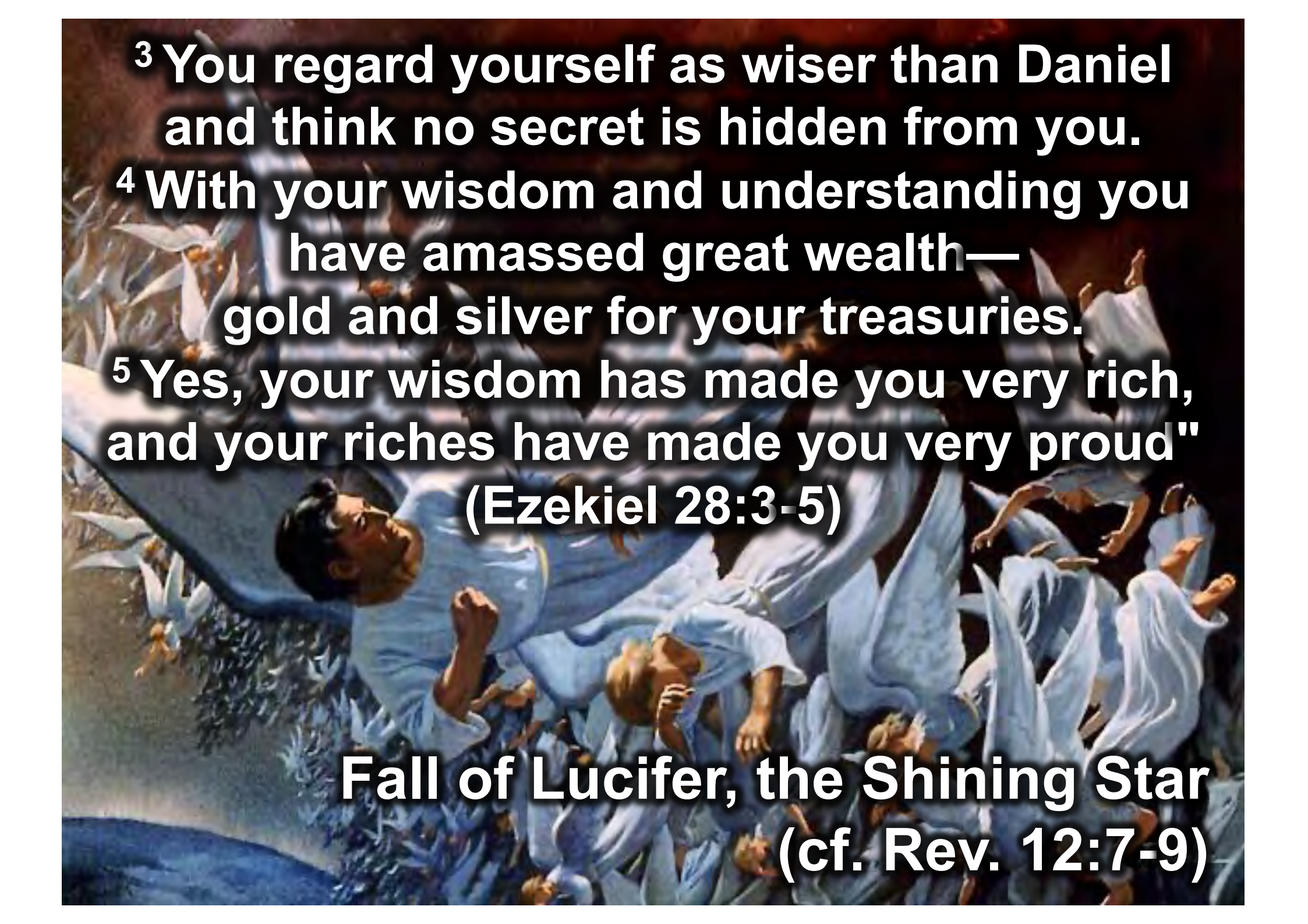
Poseidon's Temple

***Tyre's king regarded himself as the god of the sea
(Ezek. 28:2 NLT)***

2 "Son of man, give the prince of Tyre this message from the Sovereign LORD:

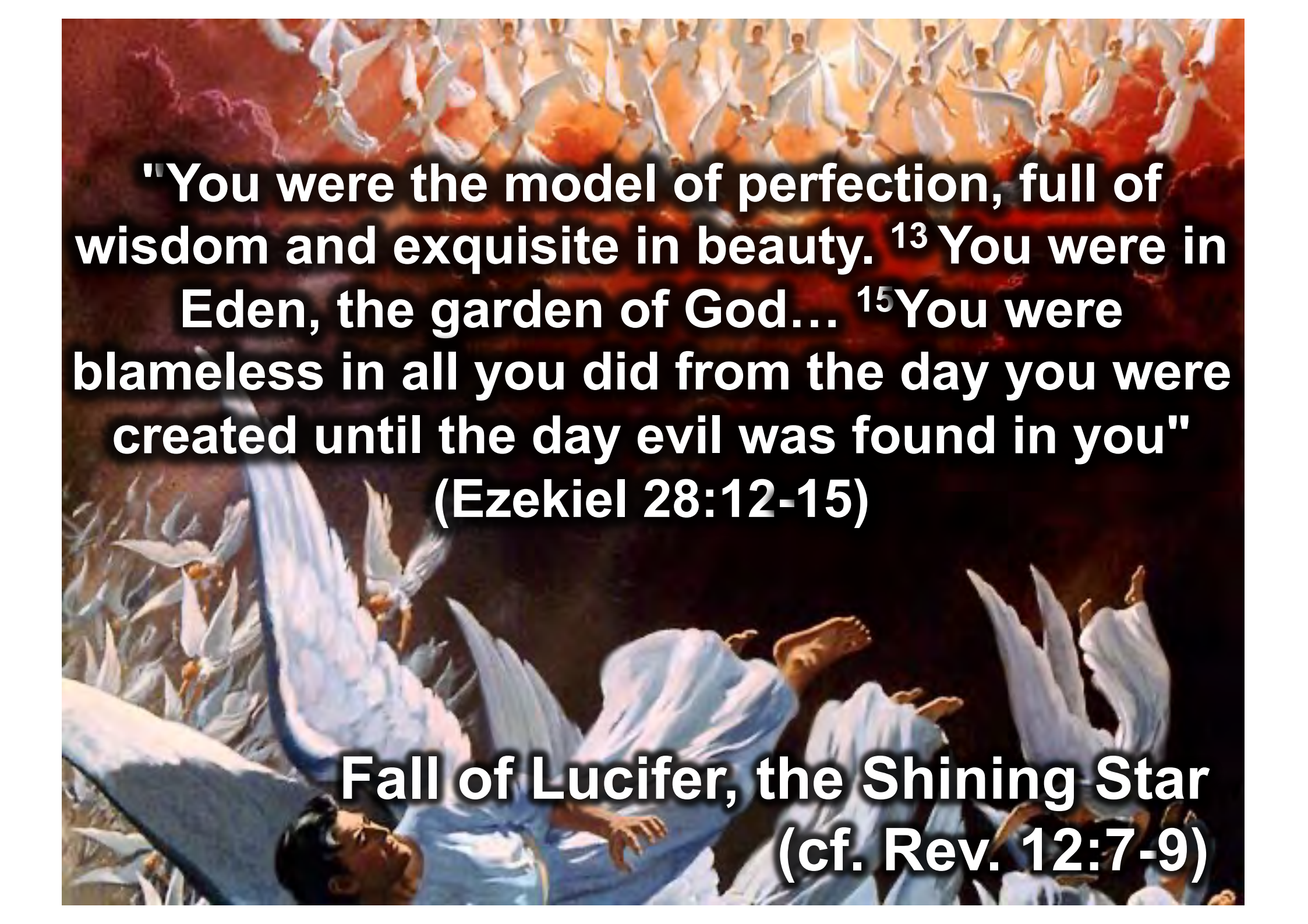
"In your great pride you claim, 'I am a god! I sit on a divine throne in the heart of the sea.' But you are only a man and not a god, though you boast that you are a god" (Ezekiel 28:2).

**Satan cast down
(cf. Rev. 12:7-13)**



**³ You regard yourself as wiser than Daniel
and think no secret is hidden from you.
⁴ With your wisdom and understanding you
have amassed great wealth—
gold and silver for your treasuries.
⁵ Yes, your wisdom has made you very rich,
and your riches have made you very proud"
(Ezekiel 28:3-5)**

**Fall of Lucifer, the Shining Star
(cf. Rev. 12:7-9)**



**"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. ¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God... ¹⁵ You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you"
(Ezekiel 28:12-15)**

**Fall of Lucifer, the Shining Star
(cf. Rev. 12:7-9)**



**16 Your rich commerce led you to violence,
and you sinned.**

**So I banished you in disgrace
from the mountain of God.**

**I expelled you, O mighty guardian,
from your place among the stones of fire.**

**17 Your heart was filled with pride
because of all your beauty.**

**Your wisdom was corrupted
by your love of splendor.**

**So I threw you to the ground and
exposed you to the curious gaze of kings"**

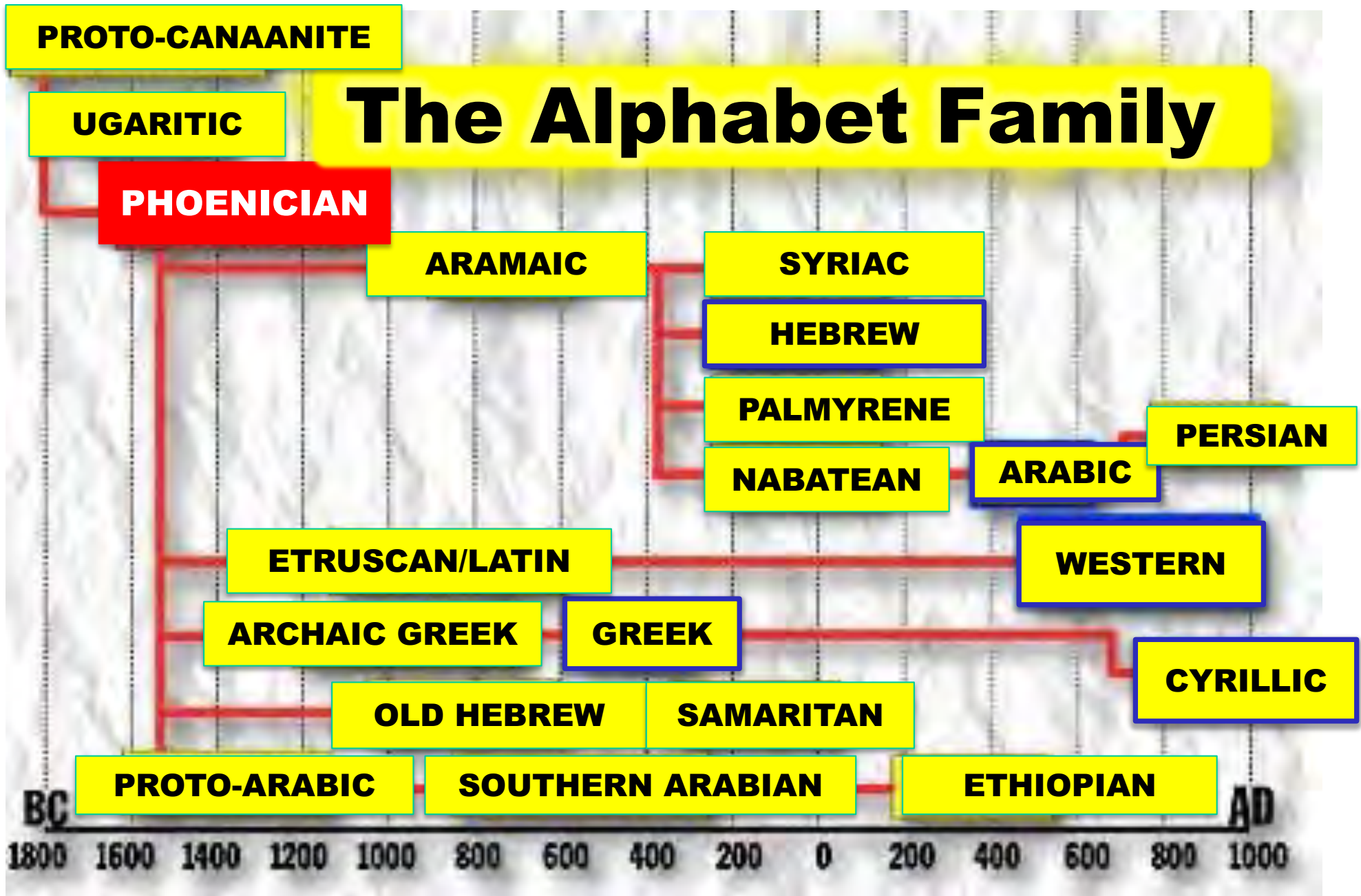
(Ezek. 28:16-17)

Culture

◊ Influenced by invaders: began to emerge and evolve in 11th and 12th centuries



◇ Phoenician script from Ugaritic was an important 'trunk' of the alphabet tree



Adapted from Encyclopedia Phoenicia <http://phoenicia.org/alphabet.html>

Language

- ◇ Ugaritic parallels to Psalms help us understand Hebrew meanings better:

“The voice of the LORD echoes above the sea.

The God of glory thunders.

The LORD thunders over the mighty sea.”

“sea” = yam (Hebrew)

“sea” = yam (Ugaritic)

“Sea god” = Yam (Ugaritic)

–Psalm 29:3 NLT

“The voice of the Lord echoes above the Sea god!

The God of glory thunders.

The Lord thunders over the mighty Sea god!”

Language

- ◇ Ugaritic parallels to Isaiah also help us understand Hebrew meanings better:

“Tyre is defenseless.

The LORD held out his hand over the **sea**,
and shook the kingdoms of the earth.”

“sea” = yam (Hebrew)

“sea” = yam (Ugaritic)

“Sea god” = Yam (Ugaritic)

–Isaiah 23:10–11 NLT

“The LORD held out his hand over **Yam**
and shook the kingdoms of the earth.”

Writing

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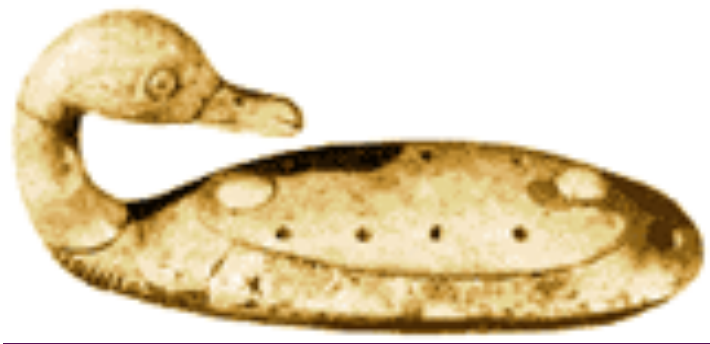
𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅	𐤆	𐤇
'	b	g	d	h	w	z	h
⊗	𐤈	𐤉	𐤊	𐤋	𐤌	𐤍	∘
t	i	k	l	m	n	s	
𐤎	𐤏	⊕	𐤐	𐤑	𐤒	×	
p	š	q	r	sh	t		

PHOENICIAN (Byblos) ALPHABET WITH LATIN EQUIVALENTS

◆ Consonantal alphabet of 22 letters

𐤀	'aleph	[ʾ]	𐤌	lamedh	[l]
𐤁	beth	[b]	𐤍	mem	[m]
𐤂	gimmel	[g]	𐤎	nun	[n]
𐤃	daleth	[d]	𐤏	samekh	[s]
𐤄	he	[h]	∘	'ayin	[ʾ]
𐤅	waw	[w]	𐤐	pe	[p]
𐤆	zayin	[z]	𐤑	tsade	[š]
𐤇	heth	[h]	⊕	qoph	[q]
⊗	teth	[t]	𐤒	reš	[r]
𐤈	yodh	[y]	𐤓	šin	[š]
𐤉	kaph	[k]	×	taw	[t]





Crafts



Tyre was famous for arts & crafts

- ◇ crafts in stone, metal, glass, etc.
- ◇ objects of gold, ivory, silver or glass
- ◇ for temples and tombs

- ◇ found throughout the Mediterranean region





Crafts



Architecture

- ◇ fashioned rocks to make homes, temples and tombs
- ◇ later constructed more elaborate buildings



Architecture



Architecture

◇ played major role in the building of Solomon's temple

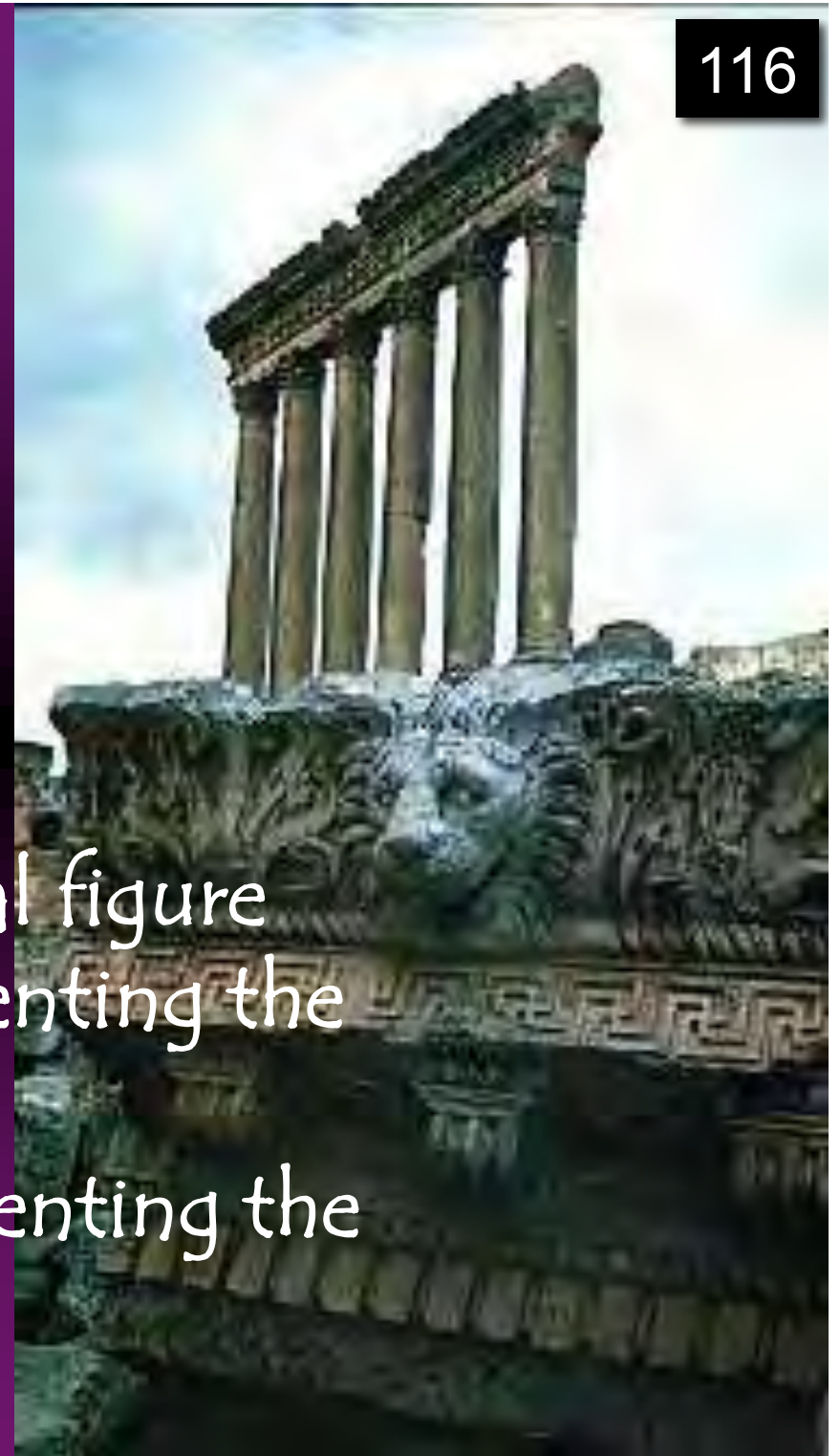


◇ supplied architects, craftsmen, builders and building materials such as, cedar and gold

Religion

The nucleus of the pantheon comprised three gods:

- A father god – cosmological figure
- A mother goddess – representing the element of the earth
- A male young god – representing the element of vegetation

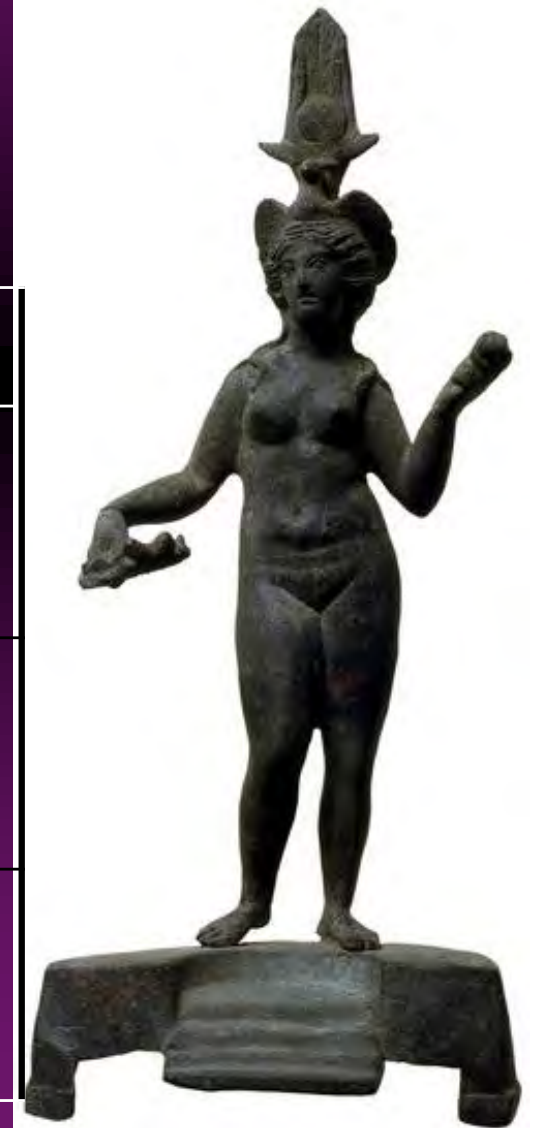


Religion

In various cities these deities were known by different names:



Cities	Tyre	Sidon	Byblos
Father god	--	Baal Shamaym	El
Mother god	Astarte	--	Baalat
Young male god	Melqart	Eshmun	Adonis



CANAANITE HIGH GOD

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160d

CANAANITE HIGH GOD

Prince of the earth, god of fertility, lord of sky & earth, god of thunder & lightning, etc.

Lord, master, owner

Chief male deity of the Phoenicians and Canaanites

Worshipped in the high places of Moab (Num. 22:41)

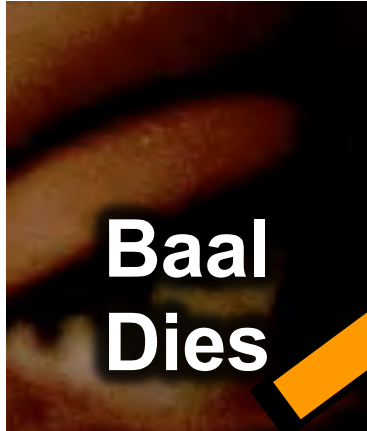
BAAL

The Baal Cycle



**Baal
Rises**

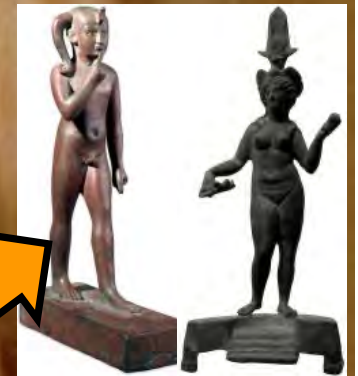
**Baal
Rises**



**Baal
Dies**



**Baal
Dies**



Winter

Spring

Summer

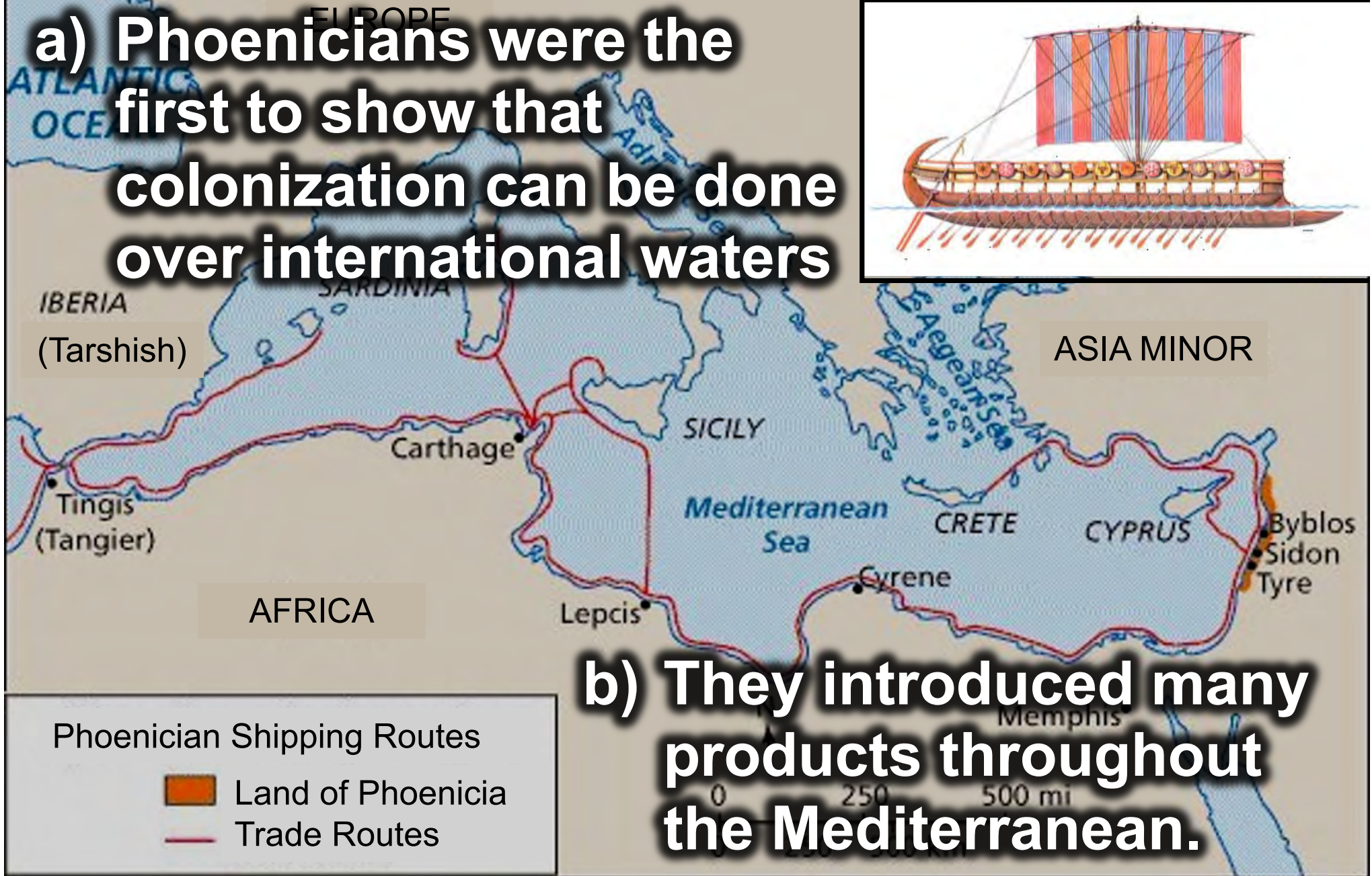
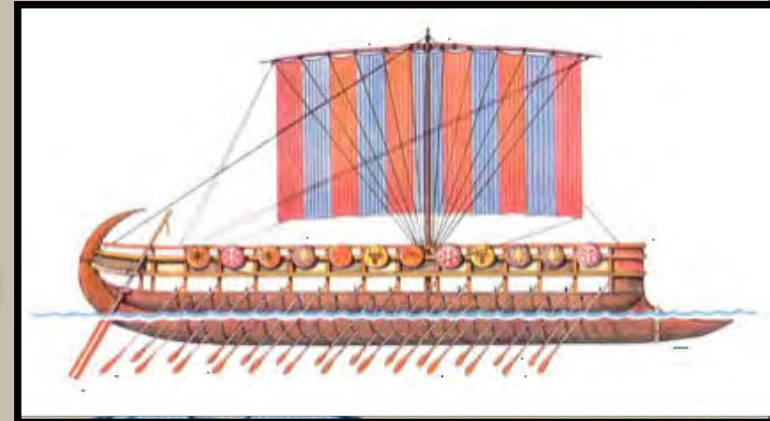
Fall

Winter

Spring

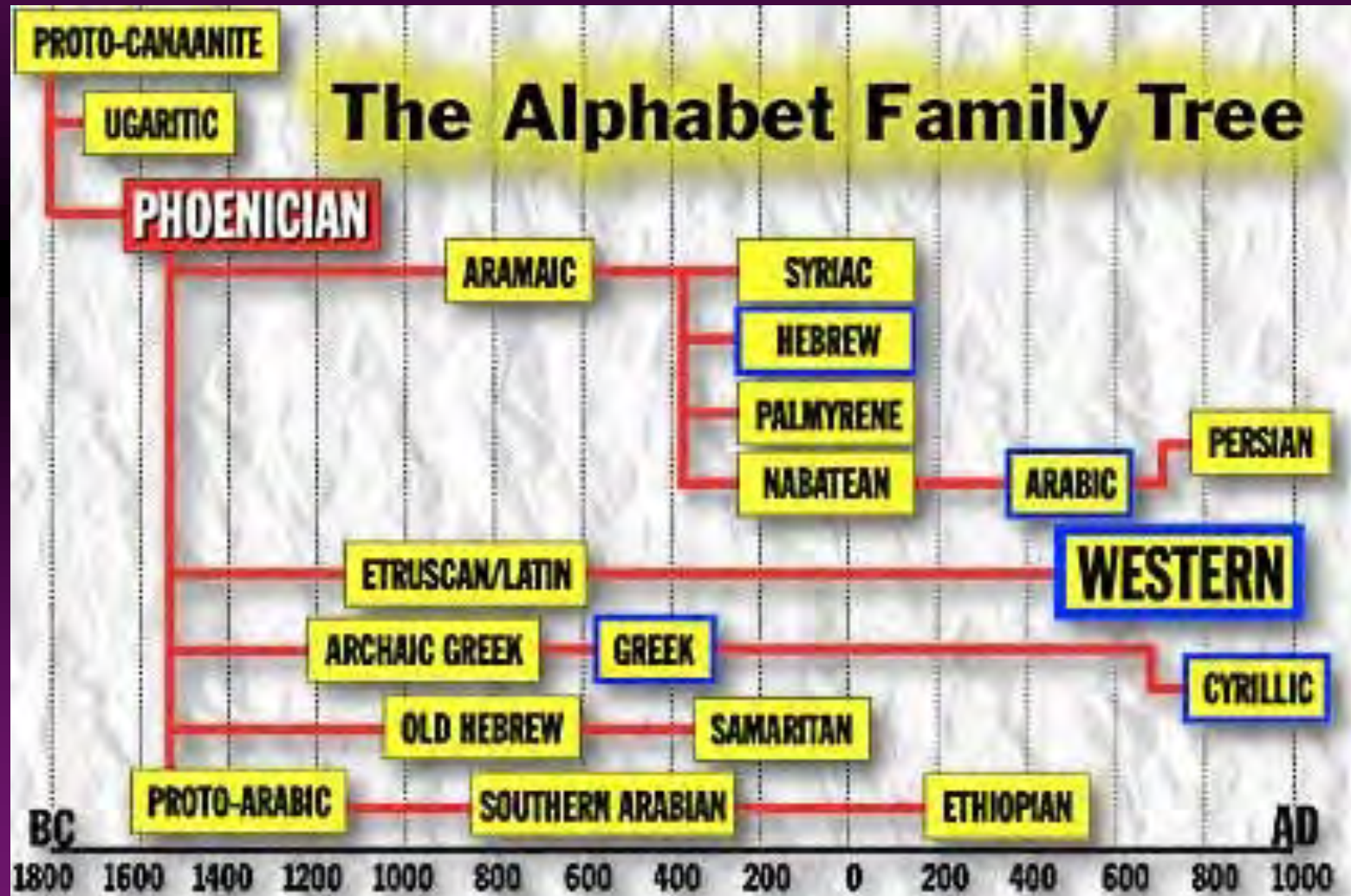
Significance of Phoenicia

a) Phoenicians were the first to show that colonization can be done over international waters



Significance of Phoenicia

c) Their language led to the Romanized script





Phoenicia & Israel (Positive)

- 1) Good political relations with King David motivated King Hiram to help David and Solomon build palaces and the temple. Solomon and Hiram partnered for trading voyages (1 Kings 5:1)

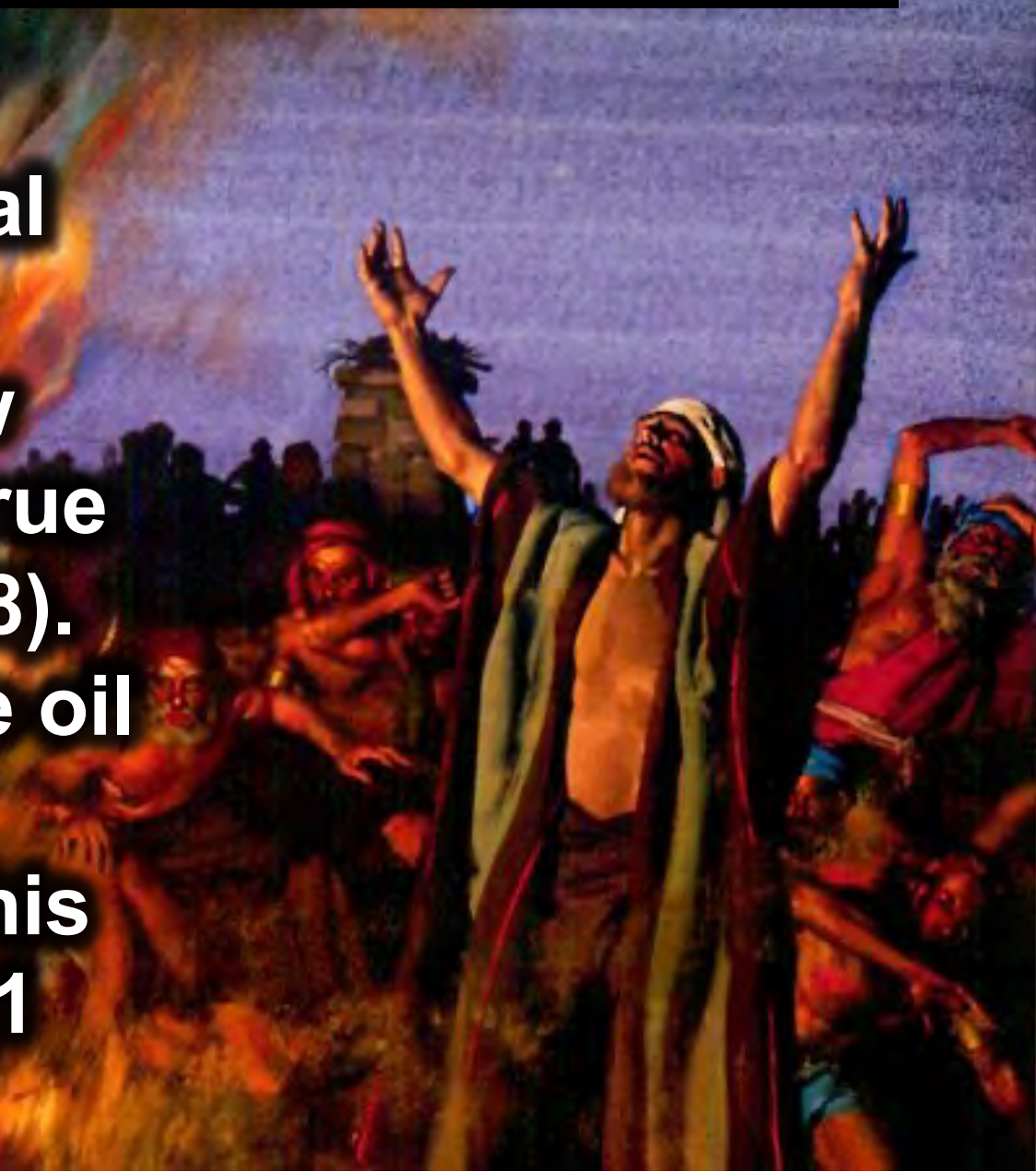


- 2) Our Hebrew knowledge is advanced via Ugaritic

Phoenicia & Israel (Positive)



3) Devotion to Baal gave Elijah the chance to show YHWH as the true God (1 Kings 18). Elijah also gave oil to a widow of Phoenicia on "his own territory" (1 Kings 17:9-23).



Phoenicia & Israel (Negative)

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Imported Paganism

"And as though it were not enough to follow the example of Jeroboam, [Ahab] married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal.³² First Ahab built a temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria.³³ Then he set up an Asherah pole. He did more to provoke the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him (1 Kings 16:31-33).



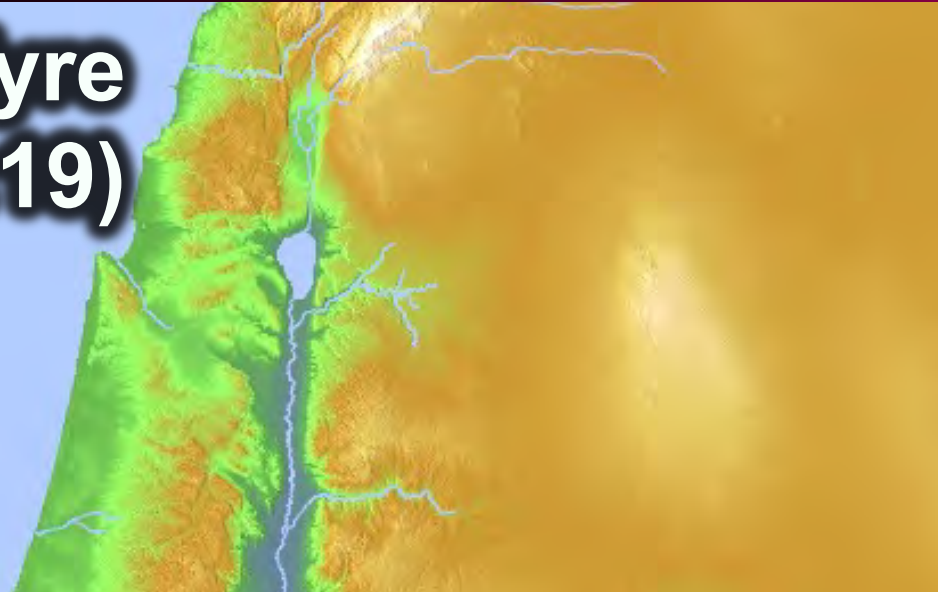
Phoenicia & Israel (Negative)

- ◇ Marriages kept diplomatic political relations with Solomon and Ahab but caused both kings to compromise (1 Kings 11:1, 4-5)
- ◇ Suppressed Israel during the times of the judges
- ◇ Baal worship infiltrated Israel (1 Kings 18)
- ◇ Later Phoenicians sold people from Judah and Jerusalem (Joel 3:3-6)



"Son of man, Tyre has **rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem**, saying..."

Tyre
(Ezekiel 26:1–28:19)



"Ha! She who was the gateway to the rich trade routes to the east has been broken, and I am the heir! Because she has been made desolate, I will become wealthy!" (26:1-2 NLT)

What principles can we learn from these texts relating to the Phoenicians?

1 Kings 18

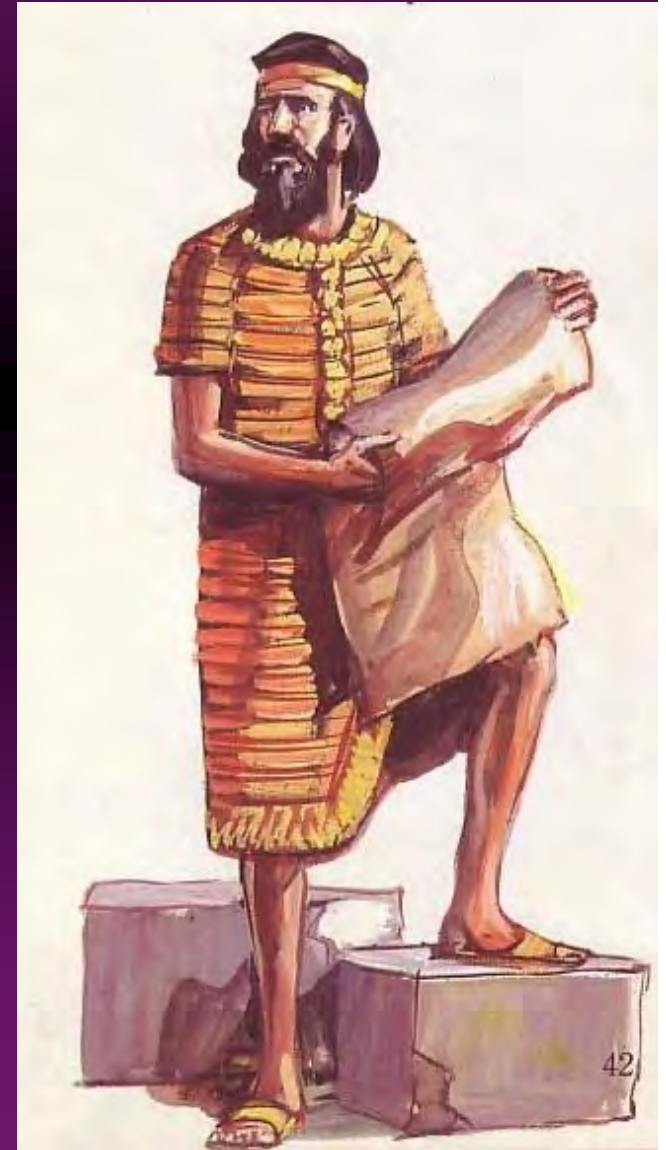
Isaiah 23



Conclusion

Lessons from Phoenicia:

- ❖ Because of their arrogance towards the Israelites, Tyre and Sidon suffered the wrath of God
- ❖ Pride over their prosperity led to their downfall



Conclusion

Lessons from Israel:

- ❖ Failed to trust God's promise – “Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess”
(Num. 33:53)
- ❖ Pricked and poked – militarily, socially, economically and spiritually
- ❖ Exposed themselves to vile practices
- ❖ Began a quest for mercantilism

Conclusion

Applications for us:

- ◇ Deal with the "pricks" and "thorns" of your flesh
- ◇ Give God all glory due to Him (be humble)
- ◇ Pray for the truth of Christ to be revealed in you and through you

Israel's Early Western Neighbors

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John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

	PHOENICIA	PHILISTIA
ORIGINS	Semitic Amorites	Aegean Sea people
PRE-JUDGES	c. 1500 Territory was divided between Hittite & Egyptian domination	Not yet in Palestine
JUDGES	<p>1400–Began slow rebellion, first against Egypt</p> <p>1380-1287–Mostly controlled by Hittites; control diminished until 1190</p> <p>1190–Invasion by sea peoples. Independent city-states established</p> <p>1100–Some control exercised by Tiglath-Pileser I</p>	<p>1190–Defeated Hittites, destroyed capital. Defeated by Rameses III, settled on coast of Palestine. 5 major cities: Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, Gaza, Ekron (A-A-G-G-E).</p> <p>11th cent–Controlled parts of at least Dan & Judah (Jud. 14:4; 15:11). Samson held somewhat in control.</p> <p>1060–Captured Israel's ark (1 Sam. 4)</p> <p>1050–Israel subdued Philistia at Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:7-14)</p>

Israel's Early Western Neighbors

114a

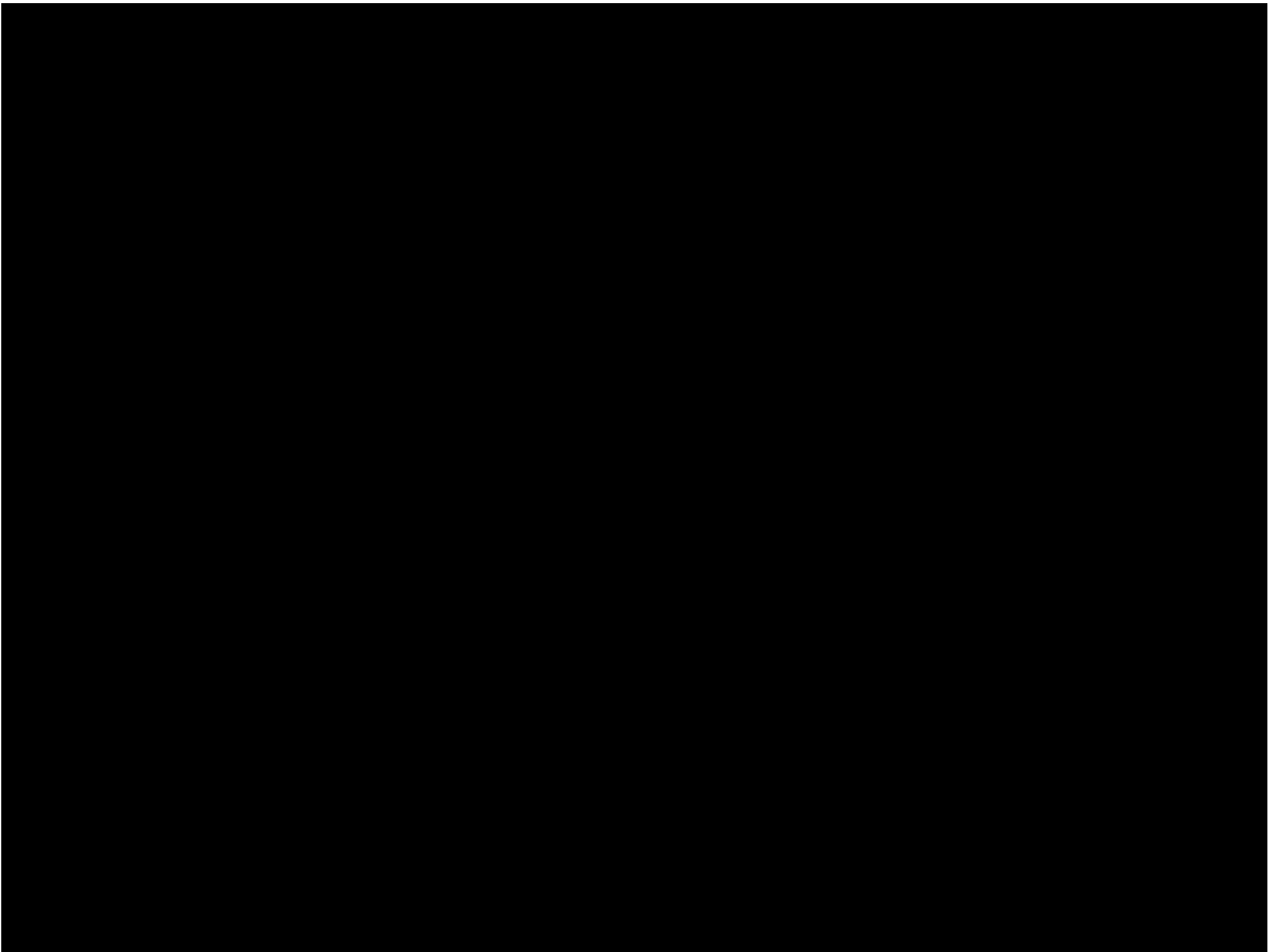
John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

	PHOENICIA	PHILISTIA
SAUL	Political independence; cultural development	Philistines held in check through most of this period. They were defeated at Michmash by Jonathan & at Elah through David. Overran country at end after defeating and killing Saul at Mt. Gilboa
1000–900 BC	Golden Age 981-942–Hiram I of Tyre; alliance with Israel. Expansion of sea trade & exploration; colonies in N. Africa, Spain, Asia Minor, & Mediterranean	David defeated & subdued the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:17-25)

Israel's Early Western Neighbors

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 71

	PHOENICIA	PHILISTIA
900–722 BC	<p>890–High Priest Ethbaal gains throne. Alliance with Israel continues with marriage of his daughter Jezebel to Ahab</p> <p>865–Tribute to Assyria's Ashurnasirpal II</p> <p>853–Joined 12-nation alliance against Shalmaneser III at Qarqar</p> <p>841–Shalmaneser III takes some cities. Assyrian tributary through end of period</p>	<p>Paid tribute to Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 17:11) Raided Judah during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17)</p> <p>805–Assyrian Adad-nirari III collected tribute; subjugated by Uzziah but invaded Judah during reign of Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:18); subdued by Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria</p>
722–570 BC	<p>725–During reign of Shalmaneser V, Luli of Sidon tried to unite Phoenicia in revolt</p> <p>701–Sennacherib responded by invasion—many cities taken, deportation, puppet ruler</p> <p>677–Revolt crushed by Esarhaddon—Sidon destroyed</p> <p>665–Baalit of Tyre revolted—suppressed by Assurbanipal</p> <p>584-571–Nebuchadnezzar siege--took Tyre</p>	<p>Country subjugated & Gaza captured by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8) People captured & deported by Nebuchadnezzar</p>



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