

## ~PHOENICIA (430)

(Phoe-ni'cia) [from a root meaning, palm tree]

- .. Geographic Features
- .. Origin And Name
- .. Land Of Seafaring Traders
- .. Arts And Crafts
- .. Religion

- That strip of coastland along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean between Syria and Israel that was bounded on the East by the Lebanon Mountains.

- It roughly corresponded to the modern country of Lebanon. For many years the principal city of ancient **Phoenicia** was Sidon, but later it was eclipsed in importance by Tyre, a city founded by a colony from Sidon.

See Also **SIDON, SIDONIANS**

See Also **TYRE**

### .. Geographic Features

- The coastal plains of this long, narrow country were interrupted in a few places by the foothills of the mountains that reached down to the sea.

- The plains were well watered by a number of streams originating in the mountain range that formed the natural boundary along the eastern frontier.

- Here were several peaks over 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) high, the highest over 3,350 meters (11,000 feet), peaks that were snowcapped a good part of the year.

- Extensive forests and orchards of various types at one time covered much of the land cedar and pine as well as oak, beech, mulberry, fig, olive, and date palm.

### .. Origin And Name

- The history of the **Phoenicians** begins after the Flood with Noah's grandson Canaan, a son of Ham. Canaan became the progenitor of 11

tribes, one of these, the Sidonians, being the descendants of Canaan's firstborn, Sidon.

- And Canaan became father to Sidon his firstborn and Heth. ([Genesis 10:15](#))
- And the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite. ([Genesis 10:16](#))
- And the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite. ([Genesis 10:17](#))
- And the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite, and afterward the families of the Canaanite were scattered. ([Genesis 10:18](#))
- As for Canaan, he became father to Sidon his firstborn and Heth. ([1 Chronicles 1:13](#))
- And the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite. ([1 Chronicles 1:14](#))
- And the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite. ([1 Chronicles 1:15](#))
- And the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite. ([1 Chronicles 1:16](#))
- The Sidonians were therefore Canaanites.
- To the south all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah, which belongs to the Sidonians, as far as Aphek, as far as the border of the Amorites. ([Joshua 13:4](#))
- And the land of the Gebalites and all of Lebanon toward the rising of the sun, from Baal-gad at the base of Mount Hermon as far as to the entering in of Hamath. ([Joshua 13:5](#))
- All the inhabitants of the mountainous region, from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians. I myself shall dispossess them from before the sons of Israel. Only make it fall to Israel as an inheritance, just as I have commanded you. ([Joshua 13:6](#))
- And the Sidonians and Amalek and Midian, when they oppressed you and you went crying out to me, that I proceeded to save you out of their hand? ([Judges 10:12](#))

- They themselves, and others too, called their land Canaan. On a coin of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes the **Syrophoenician** city of Laodicea is described as a mother city of Canaan.
- However, in time the Greeks preferred to call these Canaanite Sidonians by yet another term, **Phoenicians**. So it was that Canaanite, Sidonian, and **Phoenician** were names sometimes used interchangeably for the same people. In Isaiah's prophecy, for example, **Phoenicia** is termed, **Canaan**. **JP, RS, NW** Footnote
- His hand he has stretched out over the sea, he has caused kingdoms to be agitated. Yehowah himself has given a command against **Phoenicia**, to annihilate her strongholds. (**Isaiah 23:11**)

## • Land Of Seafaring Traders

- The **Phoenicians** were among the great seafaring peoples of the ancient world. Their ships were very seaworthy for their size. They were high both at the bow and at the stern, of wide beam, and could be powered by both sails and oars.
- And you must say to Tyre, O you who are dwelling at the entrances of the sea, the tradeswoman of the peoples for many islands, this is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said; O Tyre, you yourself have said; I am perfect in prettiness. (**Ezekiel 27:3**)
- In the heart of the seas are your territories. Your own builders have perfected your prettiness. (**Ezekiel 27:4**)
- Out of juniper timbers from Senir they built for you all the planks. A cedar from Lebanon they took to make a mast upon you. (**Ezekiel 27:5**)
- Out of massive trees from Bashan they made your oars. Your prow they made with ivory in cypress wood, from the islands of Kittim. (**Ezekiel 27:6**)
- Linen in various colors from Egypt your cloth expanse happened to be, in order for it to serve as your sail. Blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple from the islands of Elishah are what your deck covering proved to be. (**Ezekiel 27:7**)

- **Phoenician** vessels handled much of the commerce on the Mediterranean. In the **11th Century B.C.E**, Solomon employed **Phoenician** servants of Hiram to accompany his ships going to Tarshish; or Spain.
- For ships belonging to the king were going to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. Once every three years ships of Tarshish would come in, carrying gold and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks. (**2 Chronicles 9:21**)
- **Phoenician** sailors were also used aboard Solomon's fleet sent from Ezion-geber to Ophir.
- And there was a fleet of ships that King Solomon made in Ezion-geber, which is by Eloth, upon the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. (**1 Kings 9:26**)
- And Hiram kept sending in the fleet of ships his own servants, seamen, having a knowledge of the sea, along with the servants of Solomon. (**1 Kings 9:27**)
- And they proceeded to go to Ophir and take from there four hundred and twenty talents of gold and bring it in to King Solomon. (**1 Kings 9:28**)
- And Hiram's fleet of ships that carried gold from Ophir also brought from Ophir timbers of algum trees in very great amount and precious stones. (**1 Kings 10:11**)
- In the **Seventh Century B.C.E**, **Phoenician** vessels were still sailing to Tarshish and bringing back silver, iron, tin, and lead.
- Tarshish was your merchant because of the abundance of all sorts of valuable things. For its silver, iron, tin and lead, your stores were given. (**Ezekiel 27:12**)

## • Arts And Crafts

- **Phoenician** metalworkers were skilled in casting, hammering, and engraving objects of gold and silver. Other artisans specialized in carving wood and ivory, fashioning glassware, weaving wool and linen, and dyeing cloth.

- **Phoenicia** was especially noted for her purple-dye industry. Royal or Tyrian purple robes commanded the highest prices, for many thousands of murex, shellfish, each yielding but a single drop of dye, were needed for a few yards of cloth.
- The dye varied in hue, depending on where along the shores of the Mediterranean the shellfish were found, and this fact, plus the special skills of the **Phoenician** dye masters who often used a double- or triple-dyeing process, resulted in many varieties of costly fabrics that were sought after by those of rank and nobility.
- And as for you, O son of man, raise up concerning Tyre a dirge. (**Ezekiel 27:2**)
- Linen in various colors from Egypt your cloth expanse happened to be, in order for it to serve as your sail. Blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple from the islands of Elishah are what your deck covering proved to be. (**Ezekiel 27:7**)
- They were your traders in gorgeous garments, in wraps of blue material and material of various colors and in carpets of two-colored stuff, in ropes twined and solidly made, in your trading center. (**Ezekiel 27:24**)
- In the time of David and Solomon, the **Phoenicians** were famous as cutters of building stones and as woodsmen skilled in bringing down the stately trees of their forests.
- And Hiram the king of Tyre proceeded to send messengers to David, and also cedar trees and workers in wood and workers in stone for walls, and they began to build a house for David. (**2 Samuel 5:11**)
- And Hiram the king of Tyre proceeded to send his servants to Solomon, for he had heard that it was he that they had anointed as king in place of his father, for a lover of David Hiram had always proved to be. (**1 Kings 5:1**)
- And now command that they cut for me cedars from Lebanon, and my servants themselves will prove to be with your servants, and the wages of your servants I shall give to you according to all that you may say, for you yourself well know that there is among us no one knowing how to cut trees like the Sidonians. (**1 Kings 5:6**)

- **And it came about that as soon as Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he began to rejoice greatly, and he went on to say; Blessed is Yehowah today in that he has given David a wise son over this numerous people! (1 Kings 5:7)**
- **Accordingly Hiram sent to Solomon, saying; I have heard what you sent to me. For my part, I shall do all your delight in the matter of timbers of cedar trees and timbers of juniper trees. (1 Kings 5:8)**
- **My servants themselves will bring them down out of Lebanon to the sea, and I, for my part, shall put them in log rafts to go by sea clear to the place that you will send me notice of, and I shall certainly have them broken up there, and you, for your part, will carry them, and you, for your part, will do my delight by giving the food for my household. (1 Kings 5:9)**
- **So Hiram became a giver of timbers of cedar trees and timbers of juniper trees to Solomon according to all his delight. (1 Kings 5:10)**
- **So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites did the cutting, and they kept preparing the timbers and the stones to build the house. (1 Kings 5:18)**
- **Hiram the king of Tyre had himself assisted Solomon with timbers of cedar trees and timbers of juniper trees and with gold as much as he delighted in, that at that time King Solomon proceeded to give to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. (1 Kings 9:11)**
- **And Hiram the king of Tyre proceeded to send messengers to David and cedar timbers and builders of walls and workers in wood to build him a house. (1 Chronicles 14:1)**

## .. Religion

- **As Canaanites, the **Phoenicians** practiced a very base religion centered around the fertility god Baal, it involved sodomy, bestiality, and ceremonial prostitution, as well as abhorrent rites of child sacrifice.**

- The Phoenician city of Baalbek 65 kilometers (40 miles) Northeast of Beirut became one of the great centers of polytheistic worship in the ancient world, in Roman times great temples to various gods and goddesses were erected there, the ruins of which can be seen today.

**See Also CANAAN, CANAANITE No. 2 (Conquest of Canaan by Israel)**

- In the spring of **31 C.E.**, certain residents of **Phoenicia** demonstrated faith by traveling inland to Galilee to listen to Jesus and to be cured of their ailments.
- But Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee and from Judea followed him. (**Mark 3:7**)
- Even from Jerusalem and from Idumea and from across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, on hearing of how many things he was doing, came to him. (**Mark 3:8**)
- And he told his disciples to have a little boat continually at his service so that the crowd might not press upon him. (**Mark 3:9**)
- For he cured many, with the result that all those who had grievous diseases were falling upon him to touch him. (**Mark 3:10**)
- And he came down with them and took his station on a level place, and there was a great crowd of his disciples, and a great multitude of people from all of Judea and Jerusalem and the maritime country of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and be healed of their sicknesses. (**Luke 6:17**)
- A year or so later, Jesus visited the coastal plains of **Phoenicia** and was so impressed by the faith of a Syrophoenician woman living there that he miraculously cured her demon-possessed daughter.
- Leaving there, Jesus now withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. (**Matthew 15:21**)
- And, look! A **Phoenician** woman from those regions came out and cried aloud, saying; Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is badly demonized. (**Matthew 15:22**)
- But he did not say a word in answer to her. So his disciples came

up and began to request him; Send her away, because she keeps crying out after us. ([Matthew 15:23](#))

- In answer he said; I was not sent forth to any but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ([Matthew 15:24](#))
- When the woman came she began doing obeisance to him, saying; Lord, help me! ([Matthew 15:25](#))
- In answer he said; It is not right to take the bread of the children and throw it to little dogs. ([Matthew 15:26](#))
- She said; Yes, Lord, but really the little dogs do eat of the crumbs falling from the table of their masters. ([Matthew 15:27](#))
- Then Jesus said in reply to her; O woman, great is your faith, let it happen to you as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that hour on. ([Matthew 15:28](#))
- From there he rose up and went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house and did not want anyone to get to know it. Yet he could not escape notice. ([Mark 7:24](#))
- But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him and came and prostrated herself at his feet. ([Mark 7:25](#))
- The woman was a Grecian, a Syro**phoenician** nationally, and she kept asking him to expel the demon from her daughter. ([Mark 7:26](#))
- But he began by saying to her; First let the children be satisfied, for it is not right to take the bread of the children and throw it to the little dogs. ([Mark 7:27](#))
- In reply, however, she said to him; Yes, sir, and yet the little dogs underneath the table eat of the crumbs of the little children. ([Mark 7:28](#))
- At that he said to her; Because of saying this, go. The demon has gone out of your daughter. ([Mark 7:29](#))
- So she went away to her home and found the young child laid on the bed and the demon gone out. ([Mark 7:30](#))



- Now coming back out of the regions of Tyre he went through Sidon to the sea of Galilee up through the midst of the regions of Decapolis. (**Mark 7:31**)
- When persecution broke out in Judea following the martyrdom of Stephen, some Christians fled to **Phoenicia**. There, for some time, they proclaimed the Good News only to Jews.
- But following the conversion of Cornelius, congregations that had a mixture of Jews and non-Jews began to spring up along the **Phoenician** coast as well as in other parts of the Roman Empire.
- The apostle Paul visited some of these congregations in Phoenicia during the course of his travels, the last recorded visit with believers there was at Sidon when he was on his way to Rome as a prisoner in about **58 C.E.**
- Consequently those who had been scattered by the tribulation that arose over Stephen went through as far as **Phoenicia** and Cyprus and Antioch, but speaking the word to no one except to Jews only. (**Acts of Apostles 11:19**)
- Accordingly, after being conducted partway by the congregation, these men continued on their way through both **Phoenicia** and Samaria, relating in detail the conversion of people of the nations, and they were causing great joy to all the brothers. (**Acts of Apostles 15:3**)
- Now when we had torn ourselves away from them and put out to sea, we ran with a straight course and came to Cos, but on the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. (**Acts of Apostles 21:1**)
- And when we had found a boat that was crossing to **Phoenicia**, we went aboard and sailed away. (**Acts of Apostles 21:2**)
- After coming in sight of the island of Cyprus we left it behind on the left side and sailed on to Syria, and landed at Tyre, for there the boat was to unload its cargo. (**Acts of Apostles 21:3**)
- By a search we found the disciples and remained here seven days. But through the spirit they repeatedly told Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem. (**Acts of Apostles 21:4**)

- **So when we had completed the days, we went forth and started on our way, but they all, together with the women and children, conducted us as far as outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach we had prayer. (Acts of Apostles 21:5)**
- **And said good-bye to one another, and we went up into the boat but they returned to their homes. (Acts of Apostles 21:6)**
- **We then completed the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed one day with them. (Acts of Apostles 21:7)**
- **Now as it was decided for us to sail away to Italy, they proceeded to hand both Paul and certain other prisoners over to an army officer named Julius of the band of Augustus. (Acts of Apostles 27:1)**
- **Going aboard a boat from Adramyttium that was about to sail to places along the coast of the district of Asia, we set sail, there being with us Aristarchus a Macedonian from Thessalonica. (Acts of Apostles 27:2)**
- **And the next day we landed at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul with human kindness and permitted him to go to his friends and enjoy their care. (Acts of Apostles 27:3)**