



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 26

Theme: Judgment Against Tyre

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Theme: Judgment against Tyre

Missler Introduction: The next three chapters are devoted to Tyre. While Tyre is also mentioned in Isaiah 23 and Jeremiah 27, it is Ezekiel who talked the most about the city. Tyre was a legend in many ways. That unusual Mediterranean city dominated world history for several millennia. It was a seaport town, basically naval oriented.

Hiram was king of Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon. He was a devoted friend, and he helped them both prepare for and subsequently build the Temple (2 Samuel 5; 1 Kings 5; 1 Chronicles 14; and 2 Chronicles 2).

After the days of David and Solomon, however, Tyre drifted away from Israel, and it finally got so bad that the people of Tyre sold Jews as slaves to the Greeks and to the Edomites (Joel 3 and Amos 1).

Aside from that earlier friendship between Hiram and David and Solomon, the general interests of Tyre were adverse. It was north of Israel, and Egypt was to the south. Major north-south caravan routes had to go through Israel; and when they did, Israel exacted a tax, which in turn impacted the profits of the merchants in Tyre. So when Israel fell into trouble with Nebuchadnezzar, Tyre thought that was good news, and their anti-Semitism caught the attention of God.

Tyre moved from the mainland out to an island where they became almost invincible. Their navy was legendary, and sieges against them were by armies who, until Alexander the Great, failed to conquer it.¹

When Jerusalem finally fell in 586, the only states that were still resisting the Babylonians were Egypt and Tyre. It is not coincidental, therefore, that of the foreign nations addressed by Ezekiel, these two are singled out for the brunt of his oracular volleys.

McGee Introduction: Chapters 26–28 give us prophecies against Tyre and Sidon. Tyre and Sidon belong together like pork and beans, or ham and eggs. You never think of one without the other. These chapters are a marvelous example of the exactness of the literal fulfillment of prophecy.

Tyre was the capital of the great Phoenician nation which was famous for its seagoing traders. They plied the Mediterranean and even went beyond that. We know today that they went around the Pillars of Hercules and the Rock of Gibraltar, and into Great Britain, where they obtained tin. They established a colony in North Africa. Tarshish in Spain was founded by these people. They were great colonizers and went a lot farther than we used to think they did in their explorations.

Tyre was a great and proud city. Hiram, king of Tyre, had been a good friend of David and supplied him with building materials. Solomon and Hiram did not get along as well as David and Hiram had. Apparently Hiram was a great king. But also the center of Baal worship was there in Tyre and Sidon. Jezebel, the daughter of a king and former priest, married Ahab, king of Israel, and introduced Baal worship into the northern kingdom.

Now let's look at the tremendous prophecy God gives concerning Tyre and Sidon.²

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Constable: The length of this oracle reflects the great significance of Tyre at this time in Israel's history. Tyre (lit. "rock") was the principle city of Phoenicia and consisted of two towns: a fortified stronghold on a rocky outcropping one-half mile offshore, and a smaller community on the Mediterranean shoreline opposite this island town. King Hiram I had connected the two population centers with a causeway in the tenth century B.C.³⁷⁸ Tyre was important because it was a major port, and therefore a commercial center, and a military center. It stood on the Mediterranean coast 35 miles from the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee) and 100 miles from Jerusalem. Chapter 25 contains prophecies against nations to the east and west of Israel, but now the Lord looked north.

Ezekiel's prophecies of Tyre's destruction are the longest ones against this city-state in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 23; Jer. 47:4; Amos 1:9-10; Zech. 9:3-4). He saw that God would use Nebuchadnezzar to punish all the enemies of Israel, among which Tyre and Egypt (chs. 29—32) were particularly formidable.

The biblical record first mentions the city as a strong, fortified town that formed part of the boundary of the inheritance of the tribe of Asher (Josh 19:29). Tyre was prominent in the days of David and Solomon and throughout the remainder of OT history. Hiram, Solomon's contemporary, enlarged and beautified the city. Tyre became an important maritime city of the ancient Near East, being involved in great commercial and colonial enterprises throughout the Mediterranean area, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. With the rise of Assyria to power, Tyre periodically submitted to Assyria's lordship, paying tribute out of the abundance of her wealth (as in the cases of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal). Whenever possible, however, Tyre rebelled against the Assyrian power and withstood the Assyrian retribution in the security of its island fortress (as in the case of Sennacherib). As Assyria began to decline in strength, Tyre exerted her complete independence. Tyre was in this latter condition when these oracles were delivered.³

Clarke Introduction: This prophecy, beginning here and ending in the twentieth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter, is a declaration of the judgments of God against Tyre, a very famous commercial city of antiquity, which was taken by Nebuchadnezzar after an arduous siege of thirteen years. The prophet begins with introducing Tyre insulting Jerusalem, and congratulating herself on the prospect of accession to her commerce now that this city was no more, vv. 1, 2. Upon which God denounces utter destruction to Tyre, and the cities depending on her, vv. 3-6. We have then a particular account of the person raised up in the course of the Divine providence to accomplish this work. We see, as it were, his mighty hosts, (which are likened to the waves of the sea for their multitude), raising the mounds, setting the engines, and shaking the walls; we hear the noise of the horsemen, and the sound of their cars; we see the clouds of smoke and dust; we see the sword bathed in blood, and hear the groans of the dying. Tyre, (whose buildings were very splendid and magnificent, and whose walls were one hundred and fifty feet in height, with a proportionable breadth), immediately disappears; her strong (and as she thought impregnable) towers are thrown down; and her very dust is buried in the sea. Nothing remains but the bare rock, vv. 7-14. The scene is then varied. The isles and adjacent regions, by a very strong and beautiful figure, are represented to be shaken, as with a mighty earthquake by violent concussion occasioned by the fall of Tyre. The

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 25:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Thomas Constable Notes on Ezekiel 2010,

groans of the dying reach the ears of the people inhabiting these regions. Their princes, alarmed for themselves and grieved for Tyre, descend from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and clothe themselves with—sackcloth?—no, but with trembling! Arrayed in this astonishing attire, the prophet introduces them as a chorus of mourners, lamenting Tyre in a funeral song or dirge, as customary on the death of renowned personages. And pursuing the same image still farther, in the person of God, he performs the last sad office for her. She is brought forth from her place in solemn pomp; the pit is dug for her; and she is buried, to rise no more, vv. 15-21. Such is the prophecy concerning Tyre, comprehending both the city on the continent and that on the island, and most punctually fulfilled in regard to both. That on the continent was razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 572, and that on the island by Alexander the Great, B.C. 332. And at present, and for ages past, this ancient and renowned city, once the emporium of the world, and by her great naval superiority the center of a powerful monarchy, is literally what the prophet has repeatedly foretold it should be, and what in his time was, humanly speaking, so highly improbable—a BARE rock, a place to spread nets on!

Wycliffe: For other maledictions, see Isa 23; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9, 10; Zech 9:3, 4.

The antiquity of Tyre is attested to by Herodotus (ii. 44) and the Amarna Letters (cf. Pritchard, ANET, 484). Forced out of Palestine and Syria in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries, the Phoenicians turned their energies seawards and became the greatest mariners and traders of all time, in relation to the known world (cf. Albright, “The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization” in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. by G. E. Wright, pp. 328-362, esp. pp. 328, 335, 340ff.). Ahiram I, king of Tyre (969–936), made pacts with David and Solomon (II Sam 5:11; I Kgs 5:1-18; 9:10-14, 26, 27). Ahab’s queen, Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal (Ittobaal I, 887–856), king of the Sidonians, introduced the worship of the Tyrian Baal Melkart, lord of the underworld, of storm and fertility, into Israel (I Kgs 16:31; 18).

Tyre was harassed by Assyrian monarchs, and it yielded to Ashurbanipal (ANET, p. 295). It sought an alliance with Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:3; 28:1). In 588 Pharaoh-hophra attacked Tyre and Sidon (Herodotus ii. 161; Diodorus Siculus, I. 68). Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years (585–573), but did not take it (Ezk 29:18; Jos *Antiq.* X. 11. 1; *Against Apion* I. 20, 21). After a seven-month siege, Alexander the Great finally destroyed the island city in 332, by building a mole out to it from the mainland (Diod. Sic. XVII. 40-46). It was rebuilt in 314. Tyre had contacts with the ministry of Jesus (Mt 15:21-28; Mk 3:8; cf. Mt 11:21, 22), and was the home of believers (Acts 21:3-6). Origen was buried there in A.D. 254, and Eusebius preached there in 323. The Moslems conquered it in 638, and the Crusaders took it in 1124. The city was completely destroyed by the Saracens in 1291. Today it is a little fishing village, *es-Sur*.

Ezekiel gives more space to Tyre, “The Venice of Antiquity,” than does any other OT writer. In chapters 26–28, the prophet predicts the overthrow of this major sea power at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 26); laments the shipwreck of the gallant ship Tyre in a magnificent dirge (ch. 27); and in a taunt song depicts the pride and fall of the prince of Tyre (28:1-19).⁴

⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:1). Chicago: Moody Press.

BKC Introduction: After four short prophecies against the nations east and west of Israel (chap. 25) Ezekiel delivered a long prophecy against the city/nation of Tyre to the north of Israel. This section is actually four separate oracles, each beginning with “The word of the LORD came to me” (26:1; 27:1; 28:1, 11). The first oracle (26:2-21) was a direct prophecy of Tyre’s destruction; the second prophecy (chap. 27) was a lament or funeral dirge for the fallen city. The third and fourth messages were directed against the “ruler” of Tyre (28:1-10) and the “king” of Tyre (28:11-19).⁵

OTS: Some seventy-six verses in this book speak of Tyre, and four additional verses of Tyre’s sister city Sidon. Why Ezekiel devoted so much space to this small northern neighbor of Judah has puzzled commentators. The suggestion has even been made that Ezekiel used Tyre as a symbol for Babylon. Be that as it may, four distinct messages are contained in this unit. Two of these concern the city of Tyre and two concern Tyre’s ruler.⁶

ESV Ezek. 26:1–28:19: Oracles against Tyre. The Tyre oracles are neatly divided into three large segments by the concluding refrain at 26:21, 27:36, and 28:19. With further subdivisions, there are seven units in all. This lengthy collection, surpassed only by the Egypt oracles, immediately raises the question, why so much about Tyre? The answer seems to be that, of the states addressed by Ezekiel, only Tyre and Egypt had the power to withstand Babylon: Egypt's power was military, Tyre's was economic. This latter factor is especially prominent in Ezekiel's oracles. Some have claimed that the Tyre oracles, especially ch. 26, are examples of unfulfilled prophecy. Ezekiel announces the devastation of Tyre at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (26:7–13). Tyre eventually capitulated but was not destroyed, as Ezekiel eventually knew (29:17–20). How is this so-called “failure” of the prophetic word to be explained? Some recent interpreters have preferred to identify Alexander the Great's victory over Tyre in 332 b.c. with Ezekiel's prophecy. This interpretation is unsatisfactory, however, because it does not do justice to the expectation that *Babylon* would destroy Tyre (cf. 26:7). Others appeal to God's sovereign freedom, claiming he is able not only to carry out a threat but also to relent, as with Nineveh in Jonah 3. However, there is no suggestion that Tyre repented as did Nineveh, and this approach renders the interpretation of prophecy quite arbitrary. A third strategy lays emphasis on the element of promise rather than prediction: no matter the actual outcome, the real intent was to subject Tyre to God's sovereignty by the prophetic word. However, this reading is unsatisfactory in that it seems to render insignificant the details of Ezekiel's language. A further possibility is to read Ezekiel 26 along the lines suggested in ch. 16, that is, that metaphorical language should not be confused with literal. Since much of this prophecy is metaphorical, one should not look for literal fulfillment. Finally, it is also clear that biblical prophecy is not necessarily exhausted in a single historical horizon (cf. Jeremiah's 70 years [Jer. 25:12; Dan. 9:2, 20–27]). So too here, Tyre's initial reduction in Ezekiel's day (see note on Ezek. 26:1–21) was but the

⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 25:15–17). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1–28:26). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

firstfruits of the unfolding of God's judgment on Tyre. The exposition here seeks to steer carefully through these difficulties.

Ezekiel 26:1

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

From **Jeremiah 52:12** we discover that the month here was the fifth, the month of Av.

Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

Constable: An oracle concerning Tyre came to Ezekiel on the first of an unspecified month in the eleventh year of the captivity, namely, 587-586 B.C. According to Cooper, this year began on April 23, 587 B.C.³⁸⁰ Some scholars speculate that the month was the eleventh month of this eleventh year and that in the process of textual transmission scribes accidentally omitted the number of the month because it was the same number as the year. Block reconstructed the date as February 3, 585 B.C., the date of the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's 13-year siege of Tyre, which was also within a month after the news of the fall of Jerusalem reached Ezekiel.

Dake: [the eleventh year, in the first day of the month] The 11th year after Jehoiachin's captivity (note, Ezekiel 8:1). The month that Jerusalem fell in the 11th year was the 4th—about the same as our July (2 Kings 25:3,8). This prophecy began to be fulfilled then, but it took Nebuchadnezzar 13 years to overthrow the city of Tyre (Tyros), according to Josephus. While besieging Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar had driven Pharaoh back to Egypt. Tyre rejoiced over this and the fall of Judah; then, as in these prophecies, her own downfall was predicted.⁷

LAN: This message came to Ezekiel in 586 B.C. Ezekiel 26-27 are a prophecy against Tyre, the capital of Phoenicia just north of Israel. Part of the city was on the coastline, and part was on a beautiful island. Tyre rejoiced when Jerusalem fell, because Tyre and Judah always competed for the lucrative trade that came through their lands from Egypt in the south and Mesopotamia to the north. Tyre dominated the sea trading routes while Judah dominated the land caravan routes. After Judah was defeated, Tyre thought it had all the trade routes to itself. But this gloating didn't last long. In 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar attacked the city. It took him 15 years to capture Tyre (586-571) because the city's back side lay on the sea so fresh supplies could be shipped in daily.⁸

Wycliffe: In the eleventh year, in the first day of the month; i.e., 586 (or 587) B.C. Verse 2 implies that the oracle came after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, news of which Ezekiel did not hear until the twelfth year and the tenth month (33:21). Some

⁷ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁸ Life Application Bible Notes

Hebrew manuscripts and the LXX and Syriac read *eleventh year* in 33:21, which would allow for this prophecy in the eleventh year and the eleventh or twelfth month. 2. The gates of the people. Jerusalem lay on the toll roads. Is broken. She could no longer receive from the caravans the imposts that Tyre coveted.⁹

BKC 1-2: All but the first of four divisions in this chapter are introduced with the clause, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says” (vv. 7, 15, 19). This prophecy was given in the 11th year, on the first day of the month. The 11th year of Jehoiakim’s exile was the year 587-586 B.C., but Ezekiel did not state which month. Since Jerusalem fell to Babylon on July 18, 586 B.C., possibly Ezekiel’s prophecy against Tyre was prompted by Jerusalem’s imminent collapse.

In verses 1-6 Ezekiel followed the “Because/therefore/then you will know” format he used in chapter 25. Tyre’s sin was her greedy rejoicing over Jerusalem’s fall, saying Aha! (cf. 25:3) Now that Jerusalem was destroyed, her doors would be swung open to Tyre, and Tyre would prosper. Both Tyre and Jerusalem had vied for the lucrative trade routes between Egypt and the rest of the Middle East. Tyre dominated the sea routes, but Jerusalem controlled the caravan routes. Tyre responded to Jerusalem’s fall like a greedy merchant gloating over a rival’s catastrophe. Without Jerusalem being able to secure the overland caravan routes, more products would be shipped by sea. So Tyre saw Jerusalem’s fall as an opportunity to “corner the market” for trade.¹⁰

Tyre was destroyed at the same time Jerusalem was destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar took Tyre.

The Tyre material is dated to the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity, and the first day (26:1). The month is not indicated. The material probably should be assigned to September 18, 586 B.C., three weeks after the fall of the city of Jerusalem. This word to Tyre unfolds in five movements.¹¹

Chuck Smith: According to verse 1, this prophecy came to Ezekiel in the eleventh year of the king Zedekiah's reign, which would make it the year 586 B.C., the year in which Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

1-3: It is interesting to me that God does not like the wicked rejoicing in the judgments of His people. There is a quality of love in First Corinthians 13 that rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. And here God brings His judgment against Tyre because Tyre was rejoicing in the judgment of God that He brought against His people, against the city of Jerusalem. Thinking that somehow they were going to prosper from the devastation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

So God declares that, first of all, there will be many nations that will be used in the judgment of Tyre, not Nebuchadnezzar only. So that the prophecy would not be completed with just Nebuchadnezzar's conquering of Tyre, but God would bring other

⁹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁰ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 26:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹¹ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1–21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

nations against it for its destruction. And speaking of the total destruction first, and then dropping back to give us details. First of all, the overall destruction: .¹²

The date formula lacks the month, and so cannot be fixed with precision. It falls within the span of 587/586 b.c. According to Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar's siege against Tyre was launched around 586/585 b.c. and lasted 13 years (*Jewish Antiquities* 10.228).

ESV 1–6: Apart from the date formula (see note on v. 1), this unit bears striking similarity to those of ch. 25 and thus serves as a “hinge” between that sequence on Judah's nearest neighbors (see note on 25:1–32:32) and this larger complex of Tyrian oracles. Like those nations, Tyre had been involved with the coalition referred to in Jer. 27:3, and now is censured for its insult to and exploitation of Jerusalem (Ezek. 26:2).

ESV 1-21: Against Tyre. The prophet announces the destruction of Tyre at the hands of the Babylonians in four oracles grouped into two pairs, each linked by the Hebrew *ki* (vv. 7, 19; “for,” “because”; see 25:6): 26:1–6 and 7–14 look toward Tyre being razed; vv. 15–18 and 19–21 stand imaginatively on the other side of destruction, depicting reactions to Tyre's demise. To the claim that the prophecies in ch. 26 were never fulfilled, the best answer recognizes that the prophecy against Tyre in vv. 3–14 is a complex one. It combines elements that would be fulfilled in the attack of Nebuchadnezzar (he besieged Tyre for 13 years, from 585–572 b.c., an attack described in vv. 7–11), and in the subsequent attack and conquest by Alexander the Great in 332 (this provides a fulfillment for the complete destruction predicted in vv. 3–6 and vv. 12–14). OT prophecies often contain different elements that are fulfilled in the near future and in the more distant future. In addition, some parts of ch. 26 were not even fulfilled until a time later than Alexander (see note on v. 14).

Ezekiel 26:2

Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken *that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:*

God was against Tyre because she was against Israel.

Tyre, in competition with Sidon (see 1 Kin. 16:31; Isa. 23:2, 12), was a major seaport and leading city in Phoenicia (present-day Lebanon). has said: The past tense could refer to an event that had not yet taken place, using a Hebrew idiom which describes a future event as so certain that it can be expressed as having already been accomplished (see Isa. 9:6, 7; 52:13–53:12). I shall be filled was evidence of Tyre's greed and materialism, desiring any wealth of Jerusalem that could be found in its ruins after the Babylonian conquest.

¹² Chuck Smith, Pastor / founder Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa CA Sermon Notes.

Constable: Divine judgment would come on this city-state because its people rejoiced at Jerusalem's destruction (cf. 25:3; Gen. 12:3; Prov. 15:5b). According to other prophets the Tyrians had also sold Jews as slaves to the Greeks and Edomites (Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10). The Tyrians viewed Jerusalem's destruction as advancing their commercial interests. The Tyrians controlled the sea routes, but Judah had controlled the land routes. Controlling trade routes enabled a nation to impose tolls and so obtain revenue. Now Jerusalem would cease to compete with Tyre for this income. The Babylonians thus opened Jerusalem's gates to Tyre.

When Judah was strong and subjugated Edom, she controlled the caravan routes to the Red Sea, thus hindering the Phoenician traders from gaining all the profit they hoped for.

The prophetic perfect tense in Hebrew describes a future event as though it were past, as well as describing past events. Jerusalem fell on the tenth day of the fifth month of the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kings 25:8; Jer. 52:12), which was the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Dyer dated the fall of Jerusalem on July 18, 586 B.C.³⁸³ Because of the absence of reference to the month of this prophecy, it is impossible to date it definitely before or after the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel, however, gave it before news of Jerusalem's fall reached him and the other exiles (cf. 33:21).

Ezekiel cited the reason for the destruction. Tyre was a center of commerce in Ezekiel's day. When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, Tyre gloated. "She who was the door of peoples is broken," i.e., the major trading center of Jerusalem had fallen. Tyre rejoiced over Jerusalem's fall because she would be "filled with the one who has been laid waste," i.e., she would reap the profits of Judah's fall (26:2).¹³

Tyre. An ancient Phoenician city-state on the Mediterranean, between Acre and Sidon. She enjoyed great prosperity under King Hiram (980-947), who provided men and materials for the construction of David's palace (2 Sam. 5:11-12) and Solomon's palace and Temple (2 Chron. 2). *opened.* Tyre expected more trade to flow through her port if the land routes through Jerusalem were unusable. Tyre included a city on the mainland and an island just off the coast.

Ezekiel 26:3

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

Since Tyre was a seaport town, the Lord spoke idiomatically through Ezekiel in shipboard talk, speaking of it as a big, elegant ship, but one which was headed for real trouble.

The prophecy here was about Nebuchadnezzar's attack against Tyre which was about to happen. But it was more than that; the Lord had in view here more than just the 13-

¹³ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1-21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

year siege of Nebuchadnezzar as seen in the “many nations” of which his empire consisted. This prophecy included Alexander subsequently.

Constable 3-4: The Lord would set Himself against Tyre and would bring up many nations against her, like waves against her shore. This was an apt description since both parts of ancient Tyre stood on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. These nations would destroy Tyre's defensive fortifications and would even scrape the site as clean as a rock (Heb. *sela'*), a play on the name of the city (Heb. *sor*).

The siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar lasted for thirteen years (ca. 586-573 B.C.). Under King Ba'ali II, Tyre accepted Babylonian suzerainty and was ruled by 'judges.' However, when Babylonia declined in power, Tyre regained her independence once again. This brief freedom lasted till the second 'wave' of destruction brought her into submission to the Persians around 525 B.C. Tyre's remaining history demonstrated the continuing 'waves' of conquerors: the resistance to Alexander the Great, eventuating in her collapse; her initial resistance to the Seleucid kingdom of Antiochus III, terminating in her becoming part of that kingdom; her submission to Rome; and her fall to the Saracens in the fourteenth century A.D., after which she never again regained any importance. God was faithful to bring the 'many nations' against Tyre in successive 'waves' of conquest.

Alexander the Great led the third "wave" of God's judgment that destroyed the walls of fortified Tyre in 332 B.C. He was the first to conquer both parts of the city in battle. He did so by enlarging the causeway from the mainland to the island and then attacking the island fortress by land and by sea.

[many nations to come up against thee] Nations under Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 26:3,7).

BKC 3-6: God's judgment against Tyre fit her crime. He said, I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. Tyre's pride was her seagoing prowess. She knew the Mediterranean Sea better than most nations. So Ezekiel used the image of a violent ocean storm to picture God's punishment. Like ocean waves, invading nations would pound against Tyre's defenses, smashing her walls and towers. God added that He would scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. In an interesting word-play Ezekiel described Tyre's fate. "Tyre" (*šōr*) means "rock" or a "hard pebble." God would make the "rock" (*šōr*) a barren crag (*sela'*). No longer being the central city of commerce, she would become a place to spread fishnets. Fishermen generally spread out their nets to dry on barren rocks, to keep them from becoming tangled in trees or bushes. Tyre would be so decimated that the once-bustling city would be barren enough to use as a drying place for nets.

The city of Tyre included the mainland and an island about a half mile off the coast. The main city was supported by many satellite communities or suburbs around it. People in these settlements (*benôṭēhā*, lit., "her daughters") on the mainland would be ravaged by the sword.¹⁴

¹⁴ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 26:3–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

McGee: When God says, “Behold, I am against thee,” you can be sure He is against that place. Just as the waves break on the shore, God says, nations will come against Tyre, that great commercial center that had been invincible.¹⁵

Ezekiel indicated the extent of the destruction. The prophet made five specific predictions relating to the destruction of Tyre. (1) Many nations would come against Tyre. History records that the Babylonians, Alexander, Antigonus, the Arabs and the Crusaders all inflicted their blows against this place. (2) Tyre would be made a bare rock. (3) Fishermen would spread their nets at Tyre. (4) Tyre would become spoil for the nations. (5) Tyre’s satellite villages would be slain by the sword. The destruction of Tyre was certain because God had spoken. Through this experience the citizens of Tyre would come to know that Yahweh is the only God (26:3–6).¹⁶

The armies (many nations; see vv. 4, 7–14) that would attack Tyre are appropriately compared to waves of the sea, because the city of Tyre was an island fortress.

3-14 *many nations* would be involved in the destruction of Tyre. *Nebuchadnezzar* (v. 7) besieged the mainland city for thirteen years (585-572) and destroyed it. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great besieged the island city for six months and finally captured it by building a causeway out to it from the debris of the destroyed mainland city. The city was rebuilt and is mentioned in Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 3:8; Matt. 11:21-22; Acts 21:3-6. The city was almost completely destroyed by the Muslims in A.D. 1291.

ESV: The agents of destruction here are many nations, described metaphorically as the crashing of the sea and its waves. The description that follows continues this figurative language. This was fulfilled partially by the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and then more fully in the conquest by Alexander the Great in 332 b.c. (see note on 26:1–28:19). Both Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great led the military forces from “many nations” whom they had conquered. Nebuchadnezzar's title “king of kings” (26:7) reflected this reality and echoes historical records of Assyrian royal language. Alexander the Great, in attacking Tyre, had the help of 80 ships from Persia and 120 from Cyprus, in addition to soldiers from other nations.

Daniel 1-3: Tyre's Destruction Like Waves

Tyre was a city north of Israel located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. They were just across the border from the Israeli territory of the tribe of Asher, and were actually allies with Israel during the days of King David and King Solomon (2Sam 5; 1Kin 5; 1Chron 14; 2Chron 2). Unfortunately, they turned against Israel in later years - even selling Jews as slaves (Joel 3:4-6; Amos 1:9).

God announced the judgment of Tyre as being because they said of Jerusalem, "The gateway of the peoples is broken - it has opened to me, and I will be filled." The story behind this statement is that before the Jews were carried away into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, all of the trade caravans going between Egypt and Tyre had to go through Israel and were taxed. Now the merchants of Tyre were rejoicing over the

¹⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁶ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1–21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

fact that the Jews have been judged by God and removed from the land. As we were reminded in chapter 25, God is against any nation who is against the Jews.

God says that Tyre is hoping to be filled with traders, but instead He will fill her with a flood of attackers.¹⁷

Ezekiel 26:4

And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

That is exactly what Alexander did. He literally scraped the rubble of the old mainland site of Tyre to make his causeway out to the island city to level it.

Wycliffe: Tyre (=šôr; and šûr = “rock”), located on a rocky island of 142 acres, had two harbors connected by a canal, the Sidonian harbor on the northeast and the Egyptian on the south. The island city was 1200 yards offshore from the walled city on the mainland.¹⁸

McGee: Nebuchadnezzar came against the city and destroyed it, but he didn’t scrape it.¹⁹

4-5 Ezekiel used the picture of a storm that topples buildings and washes the island clean, so that the ground can do nothing but dry fishnets (v. 14). Tyre was no longer the mistress of the seas but was rather a spoil to the nations. The “daughters” are those mainland settlements which depended upon Tyre for their sustenance and defense (v. 6).

ESV 4–5: The location of Tyre in the midst of the sea, often seen in extrabiblical sources as a sign of its security, is now described with derision (see also v. 17). In the conquests of Alexander the Great, Tyre was indeed destroyed and made like a bare rock.

Ron Daniel 4-21 Tyre's Destruction

"Many nations" will be brought up against Tyre (v.3) in judgment. This judgment is described in an odd, inconceivable way. But God's word is always sure, and it proved to be quite literal.

After Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem, he put the city of Tyre to siege. In 573BC, it fell to the Babylonians after being besieged for 13 years. But in the meantime, the residents of Tyre had fled to an island which was about a half mile offshore. With a channel of water 20 feet deep separating them from the mainland, and the island's 150-foot high walls, they believed that they were now invincible.

The entire population of Tyre had been relocated, and they were safe for about 250 years. But then came the reign of Alexander the Great. As Alexander and his troops were marching toward Egypt, he sent messengers to Tyre offering them a treaty of peace. However, the Tyrians believed they were invincible in their unconquerable fortress, and killed his messengers.

¹⁷ Ron Daniel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel2601.pdf>

¹⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:4). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As a result, Alexander came to attack Tyre. But how? There was no way to attack the city from the sea, and the land was too far away. Then Alexander had an idea. Why not bring the land closer to the island?

His army began to disassemble the old city of Tyre and cast it into the sea. All of the stones and timber were turned into a land bridge: twenty feet high and two hundred feet wide, slowly advancing towards the island. After seven months of construction (Jan-July 332BC), Alexander's archers and catapults destroyed the city's defenses. Over 7,000 died defending the island, 2,000 were crucified on the beach, and the remaining 30,000 Tyrians were sold into slavery.

God's Word through Ezekiel had been fulfilled exactly.

Ezekiel 26:5

It shall be a *place* for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

Constable 5-6: Fishermen would someday use the site as a place to spread their nets to dry. The picture Ezekiel presented was that of the debris of the mainland city being pushed out into the sea where it would become a flat surface. Tyre would become spoil for the nations. Formerly she had spoiled the nations by taking their money in exchange for the commodities that she had traded. Furthermore, Tyre's daughters (her dependent villages on the mainland) would also fall in battle. The fulfillment of this prophecy would convince many of the Tyrians that Yahweh was the true God.

Babylon is a byword for godless government, and Tyre is a byword for pride and self-sufficiency . . .

The Lord Jesus ministered in Tyre (Matt. 15:21; Mark 7:24-31; Luke 6:17), and the residents responded positively to Him (cf. Matt. 11:21-22; Luke 10:13-14).

[in the midst of the sea] Tyre was located on a promontory—an elevated place extending out into the sea. The name "Tyre" means rock; it was given to the city because of its position. The island rock section became the heart of Tyre, the part on the continent being the old town. It was rich and great under Persian, Greek, Roman, and Muslim rulers before its final ruin in a.d. 1291 by the sultan of Egypt.

McGee: God said it would be a fishing village—not the proud commercial capital—and that is what it is today.²⁰

²⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ezekiel 26:6

And her daughters which *are* in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

“And they shall know that I am the Lord,” is almost like a chorus or a refrain all through the Book of Ezekiel, showing that when those judgments fell, each one knew where it was coming from.

Her daughters on the mainland (RSV; cf. v. 8). The line of Phoenician settlements opposite the island city.

McGee: “Her daughters” are, I believe, the colonies that she established. She had established one on the island of Cyprus, by the way. *Cyprus* means “copper”, and she obtained copper from there. The Phoenicians were the traders who brought these metals into the ancient civilized world.²¹

ESV Her daughters on the mainland are the villages on the mainland that were opposite the island city of Tyre. They were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and again by Alexander.

Ezekiel 26:7

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

This would be Nebuchadnezzar, but was being spelled to approximate the Babylonian way of saying it. “King of Babylon, a king of kings” because he was the king over many other kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar was a conqueror.

From Daniel 2 we learned that God ordained Nebuchadnezzar to be the supreme ruler over the earth at that time. Do not think of Babylon as sort of a little local region. God had designated him for universal rule; he started the so-called “Times of the Gentiles.” He came against Tyre in a 13-year siege before they moved offshore.

Constable 7-9: In an explanatory prophecy about Tyre's destruction, the Lord promised to send Nebuchadnezzar as an invader from the north (cf. 2 Kings 25:21; Jer. 52:9). This is the first time Ezekiel identified the agent of God's coming judgment on Tyre by name. He was a "king of kings" in that many rulers were subject to him (cf. Dan. 2:37). This would be the first "wave" of conquest, and the Lord described it more fully than the later ones. Nebuchadnezzar would come against Tyre with a great army, besiege the city, break down its walls, and slay many of the Tyrians. After defeating Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar proceeded north and attacked Tyre and its neighboring towns for thirteen years, beginning that same year.

²¹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Nebuchadnezzar (II) of Babylon reigned 605–562 b.c.

[I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon] Here God mentioned the first destroyer of Tyre. The name of this city is spelled Tyrus 14 times in this book (Ezekiel 26:7; Ezekiel 29:18-19; Ezekiel 30:10, etc.).

[a king of kings] He was "a king of kings," for many other kings submitted to him; but Christ will be The King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:15-16).

Wycliffe: Nebuchadnezzar is the form of the name always used by Ezekiel, for *Nabukudurri-usur*, "Nebo, protect my boundary." King of Babylon, a king of kings. An Assyrian title (cf. Dan 2:37; Ezr 7:12). From the north. See also Jer 1:14; 4:6; 6:1, etc. 8, 9. In his attack, Nebuchadnezzar employed: a fort or moveable tower; mound (AV, *mount*); roof of shields (AV, *lift up the buckler*), like the Roman *testudo*; engines of war, or battering rams; and axes, literally, swords, in the sense of tools. 11. Mighty pillars (RSV; *strong garrisons*, AV; singular, *massēbā*). Sacred pillars or monuments (cf. Herodotus ii. 44).²²

BKC 7-14: God said He would bring from the north ... Nebuchadnezzar. Tyre's gloating over Jerusalem's fall would be short-lived. The king who destroyed Jerusalem would also attack Tyre. After defeating Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar moved his army north to Tyre in 585 B.C. and besieged the city for 13 years till all settlements on the mainland were destroyed. Tyre could hold out for all those years because her navy brought in supplies that would otherwise have been depleted. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed mainland Tyre (depicted graphically by Ezekiel, vv. 8-12), but not the island stronghold. However, other evidence indicates that the island surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 573-572 B.C. That year Baal II succeeded Ethbaal III to the throne of Tyre. Most likely this was a political move by Nebuchadnezzar to remove the rebellious king and install a loyal vassal king. Some think Ethbaal III was deported to Babylon, but 28:8-9 seems to indicate that Nebuchadnezzar assassinated him.

Ezekiel switched from the singular he to the plural they (26:12). Probably this shift pointed to the "nations" (v. 3) that followed Nebuchadnezzar in attacking Tyre, completing the destruction he began. Alexander the Great devastated the city in 332 B.C. when it refused to submit to his advancing forces. Alexander destroyed the mainland city and then built a causeway out to the island fortress which he destroyed. In doing this, he threw stones, timber, and rubble into the sea. Though Tyre recovered from Nebuchadnezzar's and Alexander's onslaughts, she never regained the power she held before these attacks.

The final destruction of Tyre would be complete, for God predicted the city will never be rebuilt. Today this once-great commercial center lies in ruins. Though the surrounding area has been rebuilt, the original site is a mute testimony to God's awesome judgment.²³

²² Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:7). Chicago: Moody Press.

²³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 26:7–14). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel focused on the agents of destruction. God would bring Nebuchadnezzar against Tyre. The resources at his disposal included horses, chariots, horsemen and a mighty company. He would destroy Tyre's satellite cities and then lay siege to Tyre itself. He would break down the towers of the city. His forces would be so vast that the dust stirred by their feet would cover the city. The noise of his cavalry, wagons and chariots would shake the walls. Finally he would smash through the gates. The hoofs of his horses would tread down the streets of Tyre. The inhabitants of Tyre would be slain with the sword. The "strong pillars," i.e., leaders of the city, would be brought down to the ground (26:7–11). Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for some thirteen years (598–585 B.C.). He destroyed the mainland city, but was not able to conquer the island fortress.²⁴

Nelson: 7-14: The fulfillment of this prophecy of Tyre's fate began with the long siege of the city by the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar (c. 580–570 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar ruled the Neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire from 605–562 B.C. The second phase came with the Persian conquest in about 525 B.C., followed by the final and famous siege of 332 B.C. by the Greeks under Alexander, which completed the predictions of this passage (especially vv. 5, 14; see 47:10). Note the switch from he to they (v. 12; see v. 4) as well as the use of the pronoun "I" by God, which explains His sovereign control over all the nations (see 28:7; 29:8). Alexander literally fulfilled the words break down your walls (see v. 5) when his army built a causeway half a mile long between the shore and the city on its island. He tore down defensive walls to build the causeway.²⁵

ESV 7–14: This oracle develops its briefer partner (vv. 2–6), adding specificity and concreteness to the imagery as its message is reinforced. Some repeated vocabulary contributes to their coherence ("walls" and "towers," vv. 4 and 9; "bare rock," vv. 4 and 14; "a place for the spreading of nets," vv. 5 and 14).

Ezekiel 26:8

He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

ESV 8–10: Ezekiel's oracle includes many of the traditional elements of siege warfare, at the same time conjuring up much of its claustrophobia. daughters. See note on v. 6.

²⁴ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1–21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

²⁵ The Nelson Study Bible

Ezekiel 26:9

And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of ancient Tyre, just as he had at Jerusalem, and this prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Chuck Smith: And thus is described that destruction of Tyre that would come about by Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, one year after the prophecy was written, or in the year 585 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Tyre. The common practice of the Babylonian army was to, and of course, in warfare in those days, was to lay siege upon a city by surrounding the city and cutting off all outside supplies. And by cutting off all the outside supplies, they could soon deplete the city of its food resources. Once the food resources were depleted, the people began to starve to death. With a shortage of water, shortage of food, with a famine usually would come pestilence, disease. And then when the people were weakened by the pestilence and by the famine, then they would move in. And it would be much easier to take the city, because the people had been so weakened as the result of the siege.

But because Tyrus was on the seacoast and it was a beautiful port city, in fact, it was one of the major ports of the ancient world. A very rich city of merchandise, and from Tyrus, of course, were the Phoenicians and the Phoenician navy of historic lore. He was not able to totally cut off the supplies; the city of Tyrus was continually supplied by her navies from the sea, so that the people were able to live under the siege of Nebuchadnezzar. And so the siege went on for thirteen years. During which time the majority of the city moved from the mainland to the island that was about a half mile offshore. And that became then the major city of Tyre, this island offshore. So that by the time Nebuchadnezzar finally made the onslaught against the city, there was only a small garrison and a small part of the population left within the city there on the mainland. The majority of the people had moved to the island along with the wealth of the city. So that there was no spoils to be taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the conquering of the city of Tyre. So it was a very empty and hollow victory by Nebuchadnezzar inasmuch as there was no spoil for Nebuchadnezzar from the destruction. But as is described here, the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar did come to pass, beginning one year after the prophecy and continuing for the next thirteen years in his siege of the city of Tyre.

But now as we get into verse 12, there is a change of pronoun significantly. Because the prophecy was that many nations would come against Tyre. Its destruction was not to be fully accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar. So the city of Tyre went on prospering for 240 years; now an island city. And it became extremely strong and powerful. Especially now that it was an island city just a half-mile offshore, it was almost impregnable as far as any enemy was concerned. Unless you would try to attack by sea, but the Phoenician navy ruled the seas in those days. And so Tyrus became a very powerful, well-defended city because it was on this island a half-mile offshore.

Ezekiel 26:10

By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

Constable 10-11: Nebuchadnezzar's many horses would raise much dust and cause a loud commotion as they breached the walls, entered the city, and trampled the streets of the mainland town. Many people would die, and Tyre's strong pillars would fall. The pillars may refer to the leading inhabitants of the town and or to the prominent pillars in the temple of Melkart there (cf. 1 Kings 7:15).³⁸⁷

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed mainland Tyre . . . , but not the island stronghold. However, other evidence indicates that the island surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 573-572 B.C.

Ezekiel 26:11

With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

The verses from 7-11 clearly focus on Nebuchadnezzar's attack. But verse 3 said that God would use *many nations*. Nebuchadnezzar was just the first wave. The scope of God's lament over Tyre goes far beyond just Nebuchadnezzar's onslaught, and you will see some of the language go beyond the immediate. As 300 years later Alexander the Great made his attack on Tyre.

McGee: It is very interesting to note that verses 7–11 clearly predict that Nebuchadnezzar will take the city, and the pronoun *he* is all through that section. But now, beginning with the next verse the pronoun changes to *they*. God had said that the nations were coming and here is that prediction.²⁶

Ezekiel 26:12

And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

How interesting, as that is exactly what Alexander did to make his causeway. An extremely interesting and yet a bizarre prophecy. Because unparalleled in history, to my knowledge, is any city when destroyed the stones the timbers and the dust were put in the midst of the water.

Change of pronoun from he, Nebuchadnezzar, to they shall make a spoil

²⁶ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Constable: Tyre's enemies ("they") would take much spoil from the city and would push its physical remains into the sea (cf. Zech. 9:3-4). God accomplished this by the hand of Alexander the Great who used the rubble from the mainland town to widen the causeway (mole) to the fortress on the peninsula.

The change from the singular to the plural here (he to they) could imply that what Nebuchadnezzar did was not all that happened to Tyre. Ezekiel 26:12-14 were literally fulfilled by Alexander the Great who did make a causeway from the old town of the mainland. He took the city this way, in about seven months.

The prophecy now shifts to Tyre's attackers subsequent to Nebuchadnezzar. They would ransack Tyre and tear down all the structures of the place. The rubble of those walls and buildings would be dumped into the midst of the waters. History records that Alexander razed mainland Tyre and built from its debris a causeway out to the island fortress where most of the leading citizens were holed up. God would silence the revelry of that city. Tyre would become a bare rock, a place for the spreading of fishing nets. Phoenician Tyre would never be rebuilt. This prediction would certainly come to pass because it had upon it the verbal signature of the Lord (26:12-14).²⁷

ESV: That Tyre's wealth should be subject to plunder is not only inevitable in ancient warfare, it is also poetic justice, given its gloating (v. 2). However, by the time that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Tyre, much of value had been removed by sea, and apparently little wealth remained after 13 years of siege (see 29:18). Later, Alexander the Great conquered Tyre by building a 2,600-foot (800-m) causeway from the mainland out to the island fortress, thus fulfilling the prophecy of this verse, your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters. (These materials came from the destruction of the city's settlements on the mainland, 26:6, 8.)

Ezekiel 26:13

And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

All the way through here you will see an interesting emphasis on music. Tyre was an affluent, cosmopolitan city of its day. It was known for its arts and crafts as well as its seamanship.

Constable 13-14: The Lord would silence the singing and music in Tyre (cf. Isa. 23:16; Rev. 18:22). He would turn its site into a bare rock suitable for the drying of fishnets (cf. 25:5-6). Moreover the city would not rebuild on that site again, a very unusual phenomenon in ancient times. This is the fate that Yahweh decreed for Tyre.

'*Shall never be rebuilt*' might be better translated 'will not be built-up again,' that is, 'will not go back to its former state,' and does not imply that the island of Tyre would

²⁷ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1-21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

never again have any buildings or inhabitants at all.

McGee: Now this prophecy waited centuries for fulfillment. For three hundred years the ruins of Tyre lay there, and they were very impressive. Although Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the city, this second prophecy had not been fulfilled. Who was going to take up the stones and even scrape the dust into the ocean?

Well, out of the west there comes Alexander the Great, symbolized as the he goat in Daniel's prophecy. You see, after the return of the Tyrians from Babylonian captivity, they decided to rebuild their city on an island and forget all about the mainland. Since they were a seafaring power, they could better protect themselves on an island. Well, when Alexander got there, he saw the ruins of the city, but the inhabited new city was out yonder on the island out of his reach. He had plenty of time and he had plenty of soldiers, so he decided to build a causeway to the city. Where did he get the material to construct it clear out there in the ocean? He took the building material of old Tyre, the stones, the pillars, and even the dust of the city, and built a causeway over which his army marched right into the new city of Tyre. He destroyed the city, and from that day to this it has never been rebuilt.

My friend, this is a remarkable prophecy! As I mentioned, the critics try to explain away the prophecy regarding Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the city by saying that Ezekiel wrote it after it had happened, but it is impossible for them to claim that Ezekiel wrote after Alexander the Great! Only God can prophesy with such accuracy.

I have walked out on the isthmus that Alexander made from the mainland to the island and have seen the ruins. The ruins are being excavated and there were all kinds of broken pieces of pottery and artifacts around. Ezekiel's prophecy was literally fulfilled. You cannot look at the ruins of Tyre and say that the Word of God is guesswork.

Sidon stands today as it always has, but Tyre is gone. Nobody has tried to rebuild it. Lebanon hasn't tried. God's Word says that Tyre will never be rebuilt. If you can rebuild Tyre, you can contradict God's Word, but I advise you to invest your money somewhere else.²⁸

Chuck Smith 13-14: Now that's a pretty powerful statement, "I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God." I have spoken it; this is what's going to be.

Now, did God really speak that? Is this really the Word of God to the prophet Ezekiel, or is Ezekiel making calculated guesses? Well, did it really come to pass? In 322 B.C. when Alexander the Great began his move towards Persia, he was fearful that if he moved all of his troops in a war against Persia that the Phoenicians would take advantage of it and that the Phoenician navy would then attack Greece. So he felt essential to his moving further against Persia was the conquering of Tyrus. And so he moved down the coast to Tyrus and gave an ultimatum to the city of Tyrus to surrender to him or he would destroy them. The people of Tyrus scoffed at Alexander's ultimatum, because they knew that it would be difficult for any army to besiege their city. Alexander went up to Sidon and to some of the other port cities in the area and confiscated many ships. And he attempted a naval assault against Tyrus, which was defeated. He next decided that he would take the rubble of the ancient city of Tyre which had not been rebuilt on the

²⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 26:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

mainland and with the rocks and the timbers, the ruins of the ancient city, he would make this wide causeway out to the island. Taking first and throwing the rocks and the timbers into the Mediterranean beginning to form this causeway, and then putting and scraping the dirt and putting it over the top of the rocks. So he made this wide causeway out to the island.

As he began to get near the island, the people of Tyre began to heat sand until it was almost molten and then shoot this molten sand on his troops. And so they built kind of defenses against that, special types of towers and all to defend the workers against this hot sand and oil that they began to shoot over at them from the city. And he began to move up these towers and these weapons of war, and finally with a combined naval assault and the assaulting of the walls themselves, Alexander the Great was able to conquer the city of Tyre in 322 after about an eight-month siege of Tyre.

Because Tyre had resisted him, he sought to make an example of the city of Tyre to strike fear in the hearts of the neighboring areas. And so he really devastated and destroyed the city of Tyre. A tremendous slaughter and destruction. As the result, the other nations, the other cities and kingdoms around were terrified. They opened their doors to Alexander the Great. They began to capitulate one after another including Jerusalem. And Alexander the Great was of course a very religious person. Not godly--religious. And there's a difference. There are a lot of people that are religious, but not really very godly, but very religious. And he was an extremely religious person. And he did come to Jerusalem and was received by the Jews and the city was open to him. And he gave sacrifices unto the priests in Jerusalem to offer for him unto their gods. And he was actually... many cities opened to him after the conquest of Tyre.

Now, in his taking the stones, the timbers, and the dust and scraping it, he caused the prophecy of Ezekiel to be literally fulfilled some 240 years after the prophecy was made. So the prophecy was made by Ezekiel; 240 years later it was literally fulfilled. God is not in a hurry. Ezekiel prophesied it; he never lived to see the fulfillment of it. But yet, we, now in looking back, have that advantage of seeing how that history finally confirmed the fact that it evidently was God speaking to Ezekiel. It would have been impossible for him to have made these predictions just out of his own mind or head. The things that he declared were too impractical.

Now, "it will make it like the top of a rock." It is impossible to accurately determine the actual site of the original city of Tyre on the mainland because it was so totally devastated and destroyed by the dirt even being scraped and cast into the sea. We can only guess that this area which is barren rock today was no doubt somewhere in these perimeters, and in this area was the ancient city of Tyre. But there are no ruins, no walls, nothing to indicate where the city itself might have been. And so the place of it has never been found or discovered, nor can we ascertain it with any certainty at all. Which, of course, is another fulfillment here.

But because the dirt was scraped, the rocks are an excellent place for the fishermen to dry their nets. And if you go to that area today, you will find even today fishermen drying their nets on these rocks which were once the great city of Tyre, the nemesis of the ancient world because of the power of their navy. A city that was great in glory and power. But God pronounced His judgment because they rejoiced in the judgment of God upon Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 26:14

And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

From Isaiah 23:16 we know that Tyre was famous for its musicians. There is an allusion to its riches being thrown into the sea in Zechariah 9.

LAN: After a 15-year siege, Nebuchadnezzar could not conquer the part of Tyre located on the island; thus certain aspects of the description in Ezekiel 26:12, 14 exceed the actual damage done to Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. But the prophecy predicted what would happen to the island settlement later during the conquests of Alexander the Great. Alexander threw the rubble of the mainland city into the sea until it made a bridge to the island. Then he marched across the bridge and destroyed the island (332 B.C.). Today the island city is still a pile of rubble, a testimony to God's judgment.

Wycliffe: Isles. The shores and islands with which Tyre traded. Many of her colonies and mercenaries feared a threat to their own prosperity in the fall of Tyre. 16. The princes of the sea. Merchant princes or city-kings. Lay away their robes, and ... brodered garments. Cf. Jon 3:6. Note the elaborate garments of Assyrian kings in sculptures and monuments. 17, 18. The lamentation of the princes. Cf. 27:25.²⁹

Though areas around Tyre are occupied, the city itself has never been rebuilt.

ESV: You shall never be rebuilt. Tyre was rebuilt and reconquered several times after Alexander the Great, so the complete fulfillment of this prophecy did not come immediately. The modern city of Tyre is of modest size and is near the ancient site, though not identical to it. Archaeological photographs of the ancient site show ruins from ancient Tyre scattered over many acres of land. No city has been rebuilt over these ruins, however, in fulfillment of this prophecy.

Ezekiel 26:15

Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

Now from verses 15-18 we are going to see the focus of Ezekiel on the effect of the fall of Tyre on the nations. The lament is not just for Tyre; the lament is also for the nations which are affected by the fall of Tyre.

Constable 15-16: The Lord also revealed that other towns would tremble when they heard of Tyre's overthrow. These were Tyre's vassals along the coast and among the

²⁹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:15–19). Chicago: Moody Press.

islands that depended on Tyre for their prosperity and protection. Tyre had colonies in many Mediterranean coastal regions: Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, and Africa. The rulers of these communities would go into mourning and would fear because of what had overtaken their mother city (cf. Job 2:11-13; Jon. 3:6; Rev. 18:9). They would abdicate their thrones and submit to the enemy invaders.

BKC 15-18: The third section of this prophecy discusses the response of Tyre's neighbors to her fall. These coastal powers, dependent on Tyre for their trade and commerce, would be dismayed at Tyre's fall. Tyre's fall would send shock waves throughout the maritime community (the coastlands would tremble). The princes of the seacoast would remove their trappings of luxury (robes and garments) and sit in mourning, trembling and appalled at the unbelievable fate of their chief benefactor. Sitting in mourning was a common way to express grief for a loved one or friend (cf. Job 2:11-13).

As Tyre's allies came to sit and mourn her passing, they also sang a funeral lament, contrasting her present condition with her former glory. Tyre had been a formidable power on the seas, reigning supremely on the eastern Mediterranean shores. Her fall sent **terror** rippling to every shore she had touched. With their source of supplies gone, those nations would suffer great economic loss.³⁰

Ezekiel described the reaction to the destruction. Tyre presided over a network of trading colonies throughout the Mediterranean world. These island colonies would shake and tremble when they heard the news of Tyre's fall. Their princes would sit stupefied and astonished. All her former allies would take up a lamentation over the demise of that powerful merchant city (26:15-18).³¹

15-16 *all the princes of the sea.* Tyre's commercial trading partners who will mourn at the fall of Tyre.

ESV 15-18: Off the island itself, the vantage point is now that of the mainland cities (cf. vv. 6, 8) as their princes mourn the downfall of formerly majestic Tyre. The lament itself appears in vv. 17-18, an outpouring of fear-induced grief. Laments feature prominently in the Tyre and Egypt oracles (cf. 27:1-36; 28:11-19; 32:1-32).

Ezekiel 26:16

Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

³⁰ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 26:15-18). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³¹ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1-21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

The ancient symbol of mourning for a king of a foreign land when he was mourning the fall of another king, would be to come off his throne, put on different garments, and go through a ceremonial mourning.

Nelson: The princes of the sea (see 27:35) were the rulers of various settlements in Phoenicia that were connected with Tyre. They would surrender and submit to Babylonian rule when they saw what happened to Tyre: be astonished at you. They would mourn in song (see vv. 17, 18) after they took off their robes and embroidered garments (see Jon. 3:6).

Ezekiel 26:17

And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, *that wast* inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror *to be* on all that haunt it!

Constable 17-18: They would lament Tyre's fate and bemoan the destruction of such a mighty sea power, and they would acknowledge their own fear at the fall of Tyre. This brief lament is in the characteristic *qinah* or funeral dirge rhythm described previously. The Tyrians had rejoiced over Jerusalem's fall (v. 2), but these vassals demonstrated more wisdom by recognizing that the fall of Tyre meant judgment for them.

Chuck Smith 17-21: Such is the case. We can't tell exactly where the city was because it was so totally devastated and all you have is barren rock in that area where Tyre once existed.

Now, there is a modern city of Tyre which is a Palestinian stronghold in southern Lebanon. However, it is a few miles from the site of the ancient city. So though it bears the name of Tyre, it has not been built again in the area where the original Tyre once existed. There is however a spring there in Tyre known as Ras El Ain, which the engineers have measured a water flow of ten million gallons a day. So it would be a very likely spot for a city to be built because of this abundant supply of fresh water. And yet in spite of that, the city has never been built on that site again.

So God's Word holding to the present day. And you can go over there today and walk on that peninsula and see the causeway that was built by Alexander the Great looking down into the water seeing the stones that were thrown and the timbers. Well, the timbers, of course, have since have gone. But you can still see the stones, and you can see the fishermen drying their nets, and you can see the barren rocky area that was once the city of Tyre. But God's Word still holding true to the present time.

Tyre, of course, was a city of tremendous merchandise. It was almost the commercial center of the world, because the navy, the powerful navy, carried the goods from Tyre all over the Mediterranean. And they supplied all of the nations around the Mediterranean as far as England with all of the merchandise and the goods and so forth. And thus because of the commercial aspects was an extremely wealthy city. But it is interesting that God had a dislike for commercialism as such. People taking advantage of people. And in the

book of Revelation, chapter 18, we find the judgment of God that is yet to come against the commercial system that has enslaved men's souls. How many people have become slaves to the whole commercial system. That is, most of your paycheck is going out on the various credit accounts and all, and you're really a slave in a sense. You're laboring to pay the commercial accounts. And so God speaks against commercialism in Revelation 18, but also in the lamentation now against Tyre that is taken up by the prophet. And it is interesting and important for you that when you get a chance this week, you read Revelation 18 in the light of Ezekiel 27. And you will find the very same things that God is saying against the commercial system of the last days that is being destroyed was said at the destruction of Tyre. In fact, there are similar parallel passages that are here in twenty-seven that are also found in Revelation, chapter 18.

Ezekiel 26:18

Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that *are* in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.

Verses 15 - 18 here are in a Hebrew meter called the (*kinah*). A word which can also mean a dirge, like a funeral hymn. There is a particular meter in Hebrew poetry that is suggestive of a lamentation, or funeral dirge. That is the style of the rhetoric here between verses 15-18.

It is God's style to speak of a local event, but in a more connotative sense. In other words, yes, there is a lamentation against Tyre here, a literal city of the ancient world; but what is said about Tyre has a broader application.

The sin of Tyre, we are going to discover, was the sin of pride. They had great material wealth, so they felt that they were independent and did not need God. We do not have to look very far in Scripture to find other cities who had great wealth, and because of that wealth felt no sense of need for what God provides.

It is in that context that the issue of Tyre affects you and me. Even though we come from different walks of life and different economic levels, all of us in general are obviously beneficiaries of an extremely prosperous society; and that very prosperity can be our spiritual undoing.

Here was Tyre, a seagoing city that God was judging, and which Ezekiel spends 3 chapters on.

Ezekiel 26:19

For thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

Constable 19-20: The Lord further promised that after He destroyed the city by deluging it with great waves of invaders (cf. v. 3), it would die like a person placed in a grave (cf. 31:16; 32:18, 23-25, 29-30). It would go down into Sheol, as it were, and so lose its glory. He pictured the island fortress as submerged beneath a sea of invaders that would bury it (cf. 31:14-18; 32:13-32; Isa. 14:4-21).

The most fearful prospect facing ancient mariners was to be caught in a storm and be 'lost at sea.

Ezekiel mixed two metaphors for destruction in these verses: waves overwhelming a rocky seaside town, and a person going into the grave (pit, Sheol).

Wycliffe: The deep (*tfhôm*). The nether sea, virtually a proper name here, as in 31:15; Amos 7:4. Tyre was conquered by the great waters, rather than conquering them.³²

BKC 19-21: In Tyre's demise she would descend into the underworld never to rise again. Ezekiel had said Tyre's fate was like an ocean sweeping over it (v. 3). Now again he said the ocean depths would sweep over Tyre. The most fearful prospect facing ancient mariners was to be caught in a storm and be "lost at sea." Tyre would drown in the ocean and all traces of her would be lost. This same point was made again in 27:26-35.

Ezekiel then changed the imagery slightly. Instead of descending into the ocean depths, Tyre would go down to the pit (*hôr*), a figurative way of expressing death. "Pit" is synonymous with "sheol" or "the grave" (Prov. 1:12; Isa. 14:15, 19; 38:18). In Old Testament times death was a fearful event. Though the saints had some idea of resurrection (cf. Heb. 11:17-19), most viewed the grave as a place of no return. Ezekiel expressed this thought about Tyre: she would enter the place of the departed dead and never be able to **return** to the land of the living. People would long for her, but she would never again be found.³³

Ezekiel spoke of the result of destruction. Tyre was to become an uninhabited desolation. The ruins of the place would be washed by the waves, i.e., her sea wall would be destroyed. Tyre was personified and pictured descending into "the pit," i.e., the nether world, the abode of the dead. Tyre thus would descend to the "lower parts of the earth." There she would join "the people of old," i.e., other civilizations which passed on before. The language here is highly figurative. The point is that Tyre would disappear from the land of the living—from the stage of history—and never be found again. By way of contrast, God declared that he would "set glory in the land of the living." The glory of man-made kingdoms fades but the Lord's kingdom endures forever (26:19–21).³⁴

The **deep** is the same Hebrew word as in Gen. 1:2. Imagery of the chaotic waters of creation picture the coming catastrophe.

Humanity, Nature of Death—Through most of the Old Testament, death was viewed as the end of life, with no escape from its clutches. It was the final event from which there was neither escape nor return. Jesus' resurrection offered hope beyond this. See 37:1-14, Isa 25:7-8, 1 Co 15:38-57.

³² Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:19). Chicago: Moody Press.

³³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 26:19–21). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³⁴ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 26:1–21). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

19-21 Tyre would drown in the sea (v. 19), die (*go down to the pit*, v. 20), and never be rebuilt (v. 21).

ESV 19–21: The final oracle anticipates the closing of the entire foreign-nation oracle collection, which bemoans the arrival of the nations in the underworld place of the dead (32:17–32; cf. Job 3:13–19). The repeated phrase those who go down to the pit (twice, Ezek. 26:20; see 32:18) refers to the state of those whom death has separated from communion with God (cf. Isa. 38:13).

Ezekiel 26:20

When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living;

[in the land of the living] This phrase in contrast with the state of the dead occurs 14 times (Ezekiel 26:20; Ezekiel 32:23-32; Psalm 52:5; Isaiah 38:11; Isaiah 53:8; Jeremiah 11:19).

Wycliffe: Tyre was to descend into the pit, with the people dead from of old (Ps 143:3; Lam 3:6), to the low parts of the earth. Cf. 31:15 for discussion of pit, low parts, Sheol. The Scriptures often speak of the place of the dead as in the lower parts of the earth (cf. Eph 4:9), but this does not prove that the writers believed this to be the actual place of the departed spirits. Since men think in concrete terms, it is natural, in view of the burial of the body, to localize this place under the earth. Men on opposite sides of the globe speak of God as “above” them, though they know he is omnipresent (cf. Mk 6:41; 7:34; Lk 9:16; Jn 17:1). So that you will not be inhabited nor have a place (RSV; LXX, *and you will not stand*, i.e., exist) in the land of the living. This rendering of the vowel points seems to give the sense required rather than the unusual antithesis of the MT, *and I will give glory*.

Nebuchadrezzar either did not conquer Tyre, or he failed to obtain any considerable booty from it (29:18); for its treasures were probably shipped away, as Jerome suggests. Alexander the Great destroyed the city in 332 B.C., and the final destruction of the rebuilt city was the work of the Saracens in 1291 A.D. This may be an example of the conditional nature of some prophecies, a case in which repentance revoked the sentence of doom (cf. the Book of Jonah; Jer 26:17-19, which is an elucidation of Mic 3:12; Isa 38; Jer 11:7-11, a clear exposition of the principle). It is possible that Tyre was spared because of an unrecorded repentance.³⁵

The **Pit** is probably a synonym for hell (see Isa. 14:15; 38:18). **never be inhabited:** Ancient Tyre would cease to exist.

³⁵ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 26:20). Chicago: Moody Press.

Ezekiel 26:21

I will make thee a terror, and thou *shalt be no more*: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

So do not spend a lot of your time trying to chase archaeology and locate Tyre. If I understand the last part of Ezekiel 26, that is likely to be a little elusive.

Constable: Terrors would overtake the people, and the city would exist no longer even though others tried to find it (cf. 27:26-35). They would search for the city on its former site but would discover that it was not there. In other words, it would enjoy no continuing importance in history. Today only a small fishing village exists on the site, and sailors use the rocks to dry their nets (cf. v. 14).

The God who has chosen what is weak in the world also shames the strong by evidence of his power, so that no human being may boast in his presence (1 Cor 1:27-29).