Destruction of Tyre by John Martin Cir 1840.

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher
And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

Son of man, because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me; I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste: therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock.

She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah; and she shall become a spoil to the nations.

And her daughters that are in the field shall be slain with the sword: and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make forts against thee, and cast up a mound against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee. And he shall set his battering engines against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

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 wagons, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people with the sword; and the pillars of thy strength shall go down to the ground.

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 waters.

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

And I will make thee a bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to Tyre: shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded groan, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and strip off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble every moment, and be astonished at thee.

And they shall take up a lamentation over thee, and say to thee, How art
thou destroyed, that wast inhabited by seafaring men, the renowned city, that was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, that caused their terror to be on all that dwelt there! 18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be dismayed at thy departure (ASV, 1901).

**History of Tyre**

Ezekiel 26:1-14

1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying (ASV, 1901).

Ezekiel received this lengthy prophecy from the Lord on the very day that the Babylonians entered Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

The first time Tyre (Tyrus, KJV) is mentioned in the Bible is in Joshua 19:29 in reference to the land allocation to the Tribe of Asher when General Joshua would conquer the promise land. It is mentioned many times in the prophets but in no other book does God
give it as much space as He does in Ezekiel. God has given Ezekiel enough text to fill three full chapters, twenty-six, twenty-seven and, twenty-eight regarding His plans for Tyre and reasons for His prophecies against it.

It was an ancient city of the Phoenicians which is modern day southern Lebanon. According to Herodotus the father of history it was founded about 2750 B.C.\(^1\) It was located about twenty-three miles north of Acre and consisted of two-parts; an older port city on the mainland and an island city about a half-mile off the coast where most of the population lived. Joshua reports that in his day (cir. 1400 B.C.) it was a “strong city.” It was never conquered by the Israelites (II Samuel 24:7). It was a hugely successful commercial region conducting trade with the many Mediterranean cities and land regions such as Mesopotamia and Arabia. In fact during both David and Solomon’s reigns during the united monarchy it was a significant trade ally for Israel. Both of these kings had trade exchanges with Hiram of Tyre for timber, skilled labor and other building materials in exchange for food produce (II Samuel 5:11; I Kings 5:1-11; I Chronicles 14:1; II Chronicles 2:3-16). Following the civil war and the splitting of Israel into North and South positive relations continued as seen in the marriage of Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians who was also know as Ithobal of Tyre (I Kings 16:31) to Ahab the king of Israel.

After the fall of the northern kingdom, Israel in 722 B.C. the two nations became enemies. Tyre became the object of God’s strongest denunciations in Scripture (Isaiah 23:1-18; Jeremiah 25:22; 27:1-11; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9-10). Nowhere in Scripture is the denunciation stronger than in the three chapters in Ezekiel. Tyre became an extremely wealthy city through unscrupulous means and a city of strong religious idolatry and sexual immorality fueled by its pride. Nations who the Bible describes as places of evil and ungodliness are the objects of God’s judgment. These nations historically received special attention in the Word of God. Tyre, Egypt, and Babylon all are in this category. Egypt was used as a byword for the slavery of sin, immorality, and idolatry. Babylon is a byword for godless government, and Tyre is a byword for pride and self-sufficiency.

**GOD PROMISES TO WASTE TYRE**

Ezekiel 26:2-6

\(^2\)Son of man, because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me; I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste; \(^3\)therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth its waves to come up. \(^4\)And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock, \(^5\)She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah; and she shall become a spoil to the nations. \(^6\)And her daughters that are in the field shall be slain with the sword: and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

_{(ASV, 1901)}

---

\(^1\) Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translation by Aubrey de Selincourt 1954, Published by the Easton Press, Norwalk, CT, Book Two pg. 71
The Lord begins this section of Scripture by saying that Tyre’s immediate sin was their rejoicing over Jerusalem’s fall to the Babylonians. That gloating would not last too long. Now that Jerusalem was destroyed, her gates would be swung open to Tyre allowing Tyre to prosper in its efforts in economic trade with other countries such as Egypt and the Mid-East in general. This is because the two entities were competitors for trade with these other nations. Now because of this gloating over Judah’s misfortune God would cause armed forces to come against them too. He describes them as sea waves crashing against them breaking down their towers and walls. He adds that He would scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. On an interesting play on words in Hebrew the word translated as Tyre is Tsor. This is derived from the word from rock which is also Tsor but with a different Hebrew spelling. So Tyre would be scraped clean revealing a Tsor or rock.

Tyre was built on a layer of rock which was covered by a layer of earth making it habitable. The seas God describes would wash away the earth leaving it as high dry rock. After the earth was washed away exposing the rock the fishermen would find it suitable for drying their nets after they returned from the seas. The surrounding villages or suburbs (daughters) would also be ravaged but, by the sword. The Hebrew carries the sense that just as children are nourished by their parents so too are the suburbs nourished economically by the economic activity of the city. The Hebrew makes reference to a large city as a mother (II Samuel 20:19).

**The Lord Brings The Babylonians Against Tyre**

Ezekiel 26:7-9

7For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and much people. 8He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make forts against thee, and cast up a mound against thee, and raise up the buckler against thee. 9And he shall set his battering engines against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers (ASV, 1901).

The Lord’s first efforts toward Tyre’s judgment is an invasion from the Babylonians. This was essentially the beginning of the end for Tyre. There was a revival after the Babylonian siege that lasted until another siege by Alexander which was very destructive. The Lord is telling Tyre and us too through Ezekiel the methods the Babylonians will use to assault the city of Tyre on the mainland. They would first come from the north after they destroyed Jerusalem with their chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and much people. They conquered Judah in 586 B.C. and after this prophecy was given they moved against Tyre in 585 B.C. They kept up the siege for thirteen years (585-572 B.C.) until all the villages and the city were destroyed. Tyre was able to hold out for this long because her navy brought in supplies. The island part of the city was not destroyed. The Scripture text and secular history leave some uncertainty as to whether the island city was taken by the Babylonians. They did come to some peaceable terms with the king of Babylon (Ezekiel 27:26; Josephus, Ant, X, xi, 1 and see The Expository Times, 1899, pp. 378, 430, 475, 520
After this siege Sidon took the lead and Tyre was in a disturbed state: the monarchy was overthrown and judges, took its place for six years, when the old order was restored.

The decline of Babylon enabled Tyre to regain her independence for a short period until its submission to the Persians about 525 BC, and from then on it was a vassal state during the Persian empire. The first casualties would be the suburbs who would be slain by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. Then continuing on to the central mainland city they would bring their siege engines and weaponry against the city until it finally fell.

**DESTRUCTION OF TYRE**

Ezekiel 26:10-14

> 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 wagons, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. 11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people with the sword; and the pillars of thy strength shall go down to the ground. 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 waters. 13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. 14 And I will make thee a bare rock; thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more: for I Jehovah have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

The Babylonian army will easily enter the city of Tyre when the breach is made. The resistance will be minimal from the inhabitants. It will be as the text says as if the walls had already been breached. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city but not the island portion. Isaiah had called Tyre a happy city (Isaiah 23:7) but her joy would now be gone. God reiterates the extent that He will uncover the earth and expose the rocks. This prophecy is clearly meant to also describe future invasion which will destroy even the island portion of Tyre. Verse twelve change the pronoun *he* from verse ten to *they* indicating sieges beyond the Babylonians.

**OTHERS SENSE THEIR WEAKNESS**

Ezekiel 26:15-18

> 15 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah to Tyre: shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded groan, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? 16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and strip off their brodered garments: they shall

---

2 The Expository Times Volumes 1-10 (1889-1899) http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall
tremble every moment, and be astonished at thee. 17 And they shall take up a
lamentation over thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast
inhabited by seafaring men, the renowned city, that was strong in the sea, she
and her inhabitants, that caused their terror to be on all that dwelt there!
18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the
sea shall be dismayed at thy departure (ASV, 1901).

This prophecy depicts all the people’s reaction to the Babylonian invasion and their sense
of vulnerability. They will all tremble for fear of their own destruction. General life in
Tyre was safe and secure because it was a defendable island. They would all be concerned
for their own end. This was an early sense of the kings The colonies of Phoenicia were,
Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, the Balearic Island and Africa. They all
looked at Tyre as a major benefactor of wealth and they sent gifts to the central god of the
Tyrian called Heracles. Revelation chapter eighteen reveals that there will be a final end of
all commercial power on the earth because it was loved more than God.

Revelation 18:9-20

9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly
with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her
burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the
great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.
11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth
their merchandise any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious
stone, and pears, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all
thyme wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most
precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice,
and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour,
and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and
slaves; and souls of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone
from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from
thee, and men shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things,
who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment,
weeping and mourning; 16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was
arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and
precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate.
And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners,
and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off; 18 and cried out as they
looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city?
19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying,
Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made
rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye
prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her (KJV).