

# FULFILLED BIBLE PROPHECY - DESTRUCTION OF TYRE

## FULFILLED BIBLE PROPHECY DESTRUCTION OF TYRE

I will give the CONCLUSION and the APPLICATION before the presentation of the evidence concerning the great city of Tyre (see map above):

**CONCLUSION** - THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD AND IS TRUE AS SUBSTANTIATED BY THE FULFILLED PROPHECY AGAINST TYRE.

JESUS CHRIST IS CALLED "THE WORD OF GOD" AT HIS SECOND COMING (Revelation 19:13+)

JESUS CHRIST THE WORD OF GOD AT HIS FIRST COMING CLEARLY STATED "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE AND NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH ME." (John 14:6+)

JESUS CHRIST, THE WORD OF GOD, THE TRUTH, CLEARLY DECLARED "I SAID TO YOU THAT YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS, FOR UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS. (John 8:24+)

**APPLICATION:** READ THE PROPHECY OF TYRE AND THE FULFILLMENT AND HEED WHAT YOU READ. THE APOSTLE PAUL STATED "BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS AND YOU WILL BE SAVED." (Acts 16:31+).

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## INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY AGAINST TYRE

One of the greatest evidences of the Bible's divine inspiration is found in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Regarding the evidence of prophecy, Dr Norman Geisler wrote

Another forceful external testimony to the inspiration of Scripture is the fact of fulfilled prophecy. According to Deuteronomy 18, a prophet was false if he made predictions that were never fulfilled. No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfulfilled. Hundreds of predictions, some of them given hundreds of years in advance, have been literally fulfilled. The time (Dan. 9), city (Mic. 5:2), and nature (Isa. 7:14) of Christ's birth were foretold in the Old Testament, as were dozens of other things about His life, death, and resurrection (see Isa. 53). Numerous other prophecies have been fulfilled, including the destruction of Edom (Obad. 1), the curse on Babylon (Isa. 13), **the destruction of Tyre** (Ezek. 26) and Nineveh (Nah. 1-3), and the return of Israel to the Land (Isa. 11:11). Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy.<sup>9</sup> As a result, fulfilled prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible. (BORROW [A General Introduction to the Bible - see page 196](#))

It has been estimated that there are some 2500 prophecies in the Bible, almost 2000 of which have been fulfilled to the letter. Of the 2500 prophecies there are about 333 prophecies in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in One Man, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Clearly the fulfillment of all 333 in one Man would be essentially impossible based on chance alone. But what about the odds against that even 8 of Old Testament prophecies could have fulfilled in Jesus merely by chance. [Click](#) for an illustration of the statistical

chances that 8 prophecies could be fulfilled in Jesus Christ merely by chance.

**Josh McDowell** writes "One of the most unusual prophecies in the Bible is that concerning the ancient city of Tyre. Probably all books in defense of Christianity will use this example, and with good reason."

## EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY

### EZEKIEL 26

Indeed, this is a dramatic fulfilled prophecy from the LORD through His prophet Ezekiel directed against the powerful city of **Tyre**. Let's look Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the great city of Tyre.

Ezekiel 26:1-21 Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying, 2 "Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste,'

3 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, **Behold**, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. 4 'They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock. 5 'She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' declares the Lord GOD, 'and she will become spoil for the nations. 6 'Also her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword, and they will know that I am the LORD.'" 7 For thus says the Lord GOD, "**Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army.** 8 "He will slay your daughters on the mainland with the sword; and he will make siege walls against you, cast up a ramp against you and raise up a large shield against you. 9 "The blow of his battering rams he will direct against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 "Because of the multitude of his horses, the dust raised by them will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of cavalry and wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city that is breached. 11 "With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will slay your people with the sword; and your strong pillars will come down to the ground. 12 "Also they will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise, break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses, and throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water. 13 "So I will silence the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps will be heard no more. 14 "I will make you a bare rock; you will be a place for the spreading of nets. **You will be built no more, for I the LORD have spoken," declares the Lord GOD.**

15 Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre, "Shall not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall when the wounded groan, when the slaughter occurs in your midst? 16 "Then all the princes of the sea will go down from their thrones, remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble every moment and be appalled at you. 17 "They will take up a lamentation over you and say to you, 'How you have perished, O inhabited one, From the seas, O renowned city, Which was mighty on the sea, She and her inhabitants, Who imposed her terror On all her inhabitants! 18 'Now the coastlands will tremble On the day of your fall; Yes, the coastlands which are by the sea Will be terrified at your passing.'" 19 For thus says the Lord GOD, "**When I make you a desolate city**, like the cities which are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you and the great waters cover you, 20 then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set glory in the land of the living. 21 "I will bring terrors on you and **you will be no more**; though you will be sought, you will never be found again," declares the Lord GOD.

Tyre was a great Phoenician city and world capital for some 2,000 years, deriving its rule from domination of the seas. Ezekiel 26 predicted Tyre's violent future and destruction at a time when it was still a dominant power.

Ezekiel predicted that many nations would come up against Tyre (Ezekiel 26:3), that Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar would be the first to attack (Ezekiel 26:7), that Tyre's walls and towers would be broken down (Ezekiel 26:4,9); that the stones, timbers, and debris of that great city would be thrown into the sea (Ezekiel 26:12), that its location would become a bare rock and a place for the drying of fishermen's nets (Ezekiel 26:4, 5,14) and finally, that the city of Tyre would never be rebuilt (Ezekiel 26:14, 21). Note that 8 times in Ezekiel 26 it is clearly stated that the words spoken are from the Lord God (Eze 26:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 21)

**History testifies that all this is precisely what happened.** Many nations did come up against Tyre including the Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, and Crusaders. In 586 BC, three years after Ezekiel's prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar was the first of these invaders, who, after a 13 year siege, broke down the walls and towers of mainland Tyre (not the island), thus fulfilling the first of

Ezekiel's prophecies against Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar massacred all of Tyre's inhabitants except for those who escaped to an island fortress a half mile out in the Mediterranean Sea. It is notable that it was Tyre's abundance of freshwater that allowed the city to hold out against Nebuchadnezzar for so many years. In the years after Nebuchadnezzar's crushing defeat, the people of the city transferred the wealth of the former mainland city of Tyre to an adjacent island and there the new city of Tyre prospered protected by the sea and walls extending out into the sea to protect the port.

Some 241 years after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the old city of Tyre, Alexander the Great began his conquest of the ancient world, as he sought to capture Persia. But before he went to Persia, he headed south to conquer Tyre, fearing that while his troops were in the East engaged in war, and that the Phoenician navy might therefore seek to invade Greece. Alexander approached Tyre and demanded that the city surrender but they refused. After Alexander's first attempt failed, he took the rubble of the old city of Tyre left by Nebuchadnezzar and built a causeway out to the island. The city was completely destroyed by Alexander as a warning to other cities that might seek to defy his demands of surrender. After hearing of Tyre's fall, many cities opened their gates in fear to avoid being destroyed.

Centuries later Alexander the Great fulfilled a portion of the prophecy. In order to conquer the island fortress of Tyre (because he lacked a navy), he and his celebrated architect Diades devised one of the most brilliant engineering feats of ancient warfare. They built a causeway from Tyre's mainland to the island fortress, using the millions of cubic feet of rubble left over on mainland Tyre. Thus Tyre was scraped bare as a rock, just as Ezekiel predicted.

*Modern Tyre in Lebanon is a medium-sized city near to, but smaller than, the ancient site.*

**No city has been built over the ruins of ancient Tyre, in fulfillment of this prophecy.**

-- Moody Bible Commentary

The most astonishing of Ezekiel's predictions was that Tyre would never be rebuilt. This is singularly incredible because Tyre is strategically located on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea and contains the Springs of Reselain, which pump ten million gallons of fresh water daily, enough to take care of the needs of a modern city. Yet, history records that after a succession of invasions, Tyre finally and irrevocably fell in A.D. 1291, never to be rebuilt again. Some 200 years ago archeologists were watching some fishermen spreading their nets on the bare rocks of a place that proved to be Tyre.

Today Tyre has been humbled to the point of becoming a place for the drying of fishermen's nets, literally what Ezekiel prophesied some 2500 years ago! What are the chances that Ezekiel could have guessed correctly? It has been conservatively estimated in the book, [Science Speaks \(BORROW - see page 72\)](#) Professor Peter Stoner that the chances are about one in 75,000,000.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Messianic Prophecy](#)
- [Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah](#)
- BORROW [John Walvoord's The Nations in Prophecy, page 166](#) - discussion of Tyre

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**Dr John Walvoord** adds the following discussion on the **Prophecy Against Tyre** (Source: BORROW [Every Prophecy in the Bible, see page 74](#))

Ezekiel 26:1-21. The prophecy against Tyre occupies three long chapters of Ezekiel. Tyre was judged because she rejoiced in Judah's destruction, thinking that it would bring further business to them (Ezekiel 26:1-2). God predicted that Tyre would be destroyed and the rubble of her city would be scraped away to bare rock. On the ocean side of Tyre where she formerly had great commerce there would be fishnets (Ezekiel 26:4-6).

This prophecy was given "In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month" (Ezekiel 26:1), the time when Jerusalem was in imminent danger of collapse or capture by Babylon. At this time of tension God spoke to Ezekiel concerning Tyre. God pronounced judgment on her because she rejoiced in Judah's fall (Ezekiel 26:2). God predicted that Tyre herself would be destroyed, her walls pulled down, and ruins scraped away down to the bare rock (Ezekiel 26:3-4). Where they formerly had commerce, on the seashore fishermen would spread their nets. "Ravaged by the sword" (Ezekiel 26:6), Tyre would not be rebuilt. Though Tyre had gloated over Jerusalem's fall, she herself was to experience the devastation of the Babylonian armies and later the invasion of the armies of Alexander the Great.

In 332 B.C. the armies of Alexander destroyed the city on the shore and scraped the debris into the sea to make a causeway to the island fortress. The bare ground where Tyre once stood is testimony today of the literal fulfillment of this prophecy. Tyre never regained power after this attack. Further details concerning the prophecy of Tyre's complete destruction were recorded in the rest of this chapter (Ezekiel 26:15-21).

Ezekiel 27:1-36. Unlike Jerusalem which was rebuilt many times, Tyre was not to survive and so her rich trading enterprise would cease. Her customers included Lebanon (Ezekiel 27:5), Egypt (Ezekiel 27:7) Elishah, an ancient name for Cyprus (Ezekiel 27:7), Persia, Lydia, and Cebal, an ancient name for Byblos (Ezekiel 27:8-10), Greece, Tubal, and Meshech (Ezekiel 27:13), Rhodes, Togarmah, and Aram (Ezekiel 27:14-16), Judah, Israel, and Damascus (Ezekiel 27:17-18), Greece and Arabia (Ezekiel 27:19-24), and many others. Her ships were renowned for their rich merchandise (Ezekiel 27:25-27). Her destruction, however, would cause mourning on behalf of those who traded with her (Ezekiel 27:27-36). God declared that she would "come to a horrible end and will be no more" (Ezekiel 27:36).

(Source: BORROW [Every Prophecy in the Bible, see page 74](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [Is Ezekiel 26:14 a false prophecy because it says that Tyre will never be rebuilt?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Ezekiel 26:1—28:19 is a prophecy against the ancient Phoenician city-state and commercial center of [Tyre](#). Because of Tyre's pride and exploitation of God's people, Israel, their judgment was ensured. Writing between 593 and 565 BC, the [prophet Ezekiel](#) warns of the devastation that would come upon Tyre.

In Ezekiel 26:3–6, the Lord says to the wicked city, "I am against you, Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets. . . . She will become plunder for the nations, and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword." In verse 14, the Lord makes this startling promise: "I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt."

These prophecies came true in amazing detail. In analyzing the passage and its fulfillment, a little geography is helpful. The name *Tyre* was associated with two locations of the city: one location was on the mainland, and we could call it "continental Tyre," "coastal Tyre," or "Old Tyre." The other location was on a nearby small island, and we could call it "insular Tyre" or "New Tyre." Insular Tyre had two harbors and was a major center of commerce in the Mediterranean. The island on which New Tyre was built was separated from the mainland by a shallow strait only about 540 yards wide.

God said that "many nations" would come against Tyre, and that's what history records:

- [King Nebuchadnezzar](#) of Babylon besieged coastal Tyre (585—573 BC), and the city on the mainland fell. Babylon was unable to conquer insular Tyre, however, and so only partially fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy.
- Greece, under [Alexander the Great](#), besieged insular Tyre (332 BC), destroyed the city, and killed about 8,000 men. In besieging the island, Alexander used rubble from the demolished buildings of coastal Tyre to build a causeway across the channel to insular Tyre. In this way, the prophecy of Ezekiel 26:12 came true in literal fashion: "They will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea." Tyre was razed to the ground, and from then on the island on which Tyre was built was no longer an island but a peninsula.

After Alexander's conquest, Tyre never regained its glory and went through long periods of being totally uninhabited. At various times, other settlements have been established near the site of Tyre, but those, too, have suffered invasion:

- The [Muslims](#) conquered Tyre in AD 638.
- [Crusaders](#) from Europe conquered the area in AD 1124.
- The Mameluke Muslims retook the area in AD 1291 and reduced Tyre to ashes. The place remained uninhabited for the next 300 years.

In 1894 the population of Tyre was reported to be about 200 people living in an obscure fishing village. In more recent times, the country of Lebanon has been rebuilding Tyre and rebranding it as a tourist attraction. The city now has an estimated population of 135,000. Tyre's southern harbor has been long unusable, but the northern harbor is still used for small fishing operations and recreation.

True to Ezekiel's prophecy, the city of Tyre was at one time completely destroyed, and, due to Alexander the Great's determination to conquer insular Tyre, the place became "a bare rock, . . . a place to spread fishnets" (Ezekiel 26:14).

However, the prophecy of Ezekiel 26:14 also says that Tyre "will never be rebuilt," and this has caused some critics to claim the Bible contains a false prophecy, since there does exist a village of Tyre today. In answer to this, we'll focus on the word *rebuilt*. If Tyre were to be truly "rebuilt," then everything mentioned in Ezekiel 27 would have to be restored:

- national prominence and regional influence (see Ezekiel 27:3)
- national strength and security (see Ezekiel 27:10–11)
- wealth and prosperity and opulence (see Ezekiel 27:3–4, 33)

The prophecy of Ezekiel 26:14 does *not* mean there would never be anything built on the island. It means that, after its final defeat by wave after wave of conquerors, Tyre would never regain the status it held in Ezekiel's day. Tyre would never again be a commercial superpower, a world trader, or a colonizer. Tyrians would never again possess the riches and prosperity they had in their city's heyday.

When God told Tyre, "You will never be rebuilt," He did not lie. Ancient Tyre was stripped of its glory and strength.

Modern Tyre is but a shadow of its former reality. The businesses and dwellings that now stand on the ancient site are a far cry from the luxury, greatness, or influence of the original city-state. (ED: THIS REFERS TO THE MAINLAND, NOT THE TYRE THAT WAS ON THE ADJACENT ISLAND - [SEE NOTE](#)). *That* Tyre—the Tyre judged by God—will never be reconstituted or rebuilt [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of the city of Tyre in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Tyre is thought to be one of the oldest cities on the Phoenician coast, established long before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan. Isaiah affirms Tyre's ancient origins as "from days of old" (Isaiah 23:5–7).

Tyre is situated on the Mediterranean coast directly north of Jerusalem between the mountains of [Lebanon](#) and the Mediterranean Sea, about 20 miles south of Sidon and 23 miles north of Acre. Neighboring Sidon is believed to be the oldest Phoenician city, but Tyre's history is more distinguished. The name Tyre (*Tzor* in Hebrew) signifies "a rock," an apt description for the rocky coastal fortress. In ancient times, Tyre flourished as a maritime city and a busy center for commercial trade. The area's most valuable export was its then world-famous purple dye.

Originally, the ancient city was divided into two parts: an older port city ("Old Tyre") located on the mainland and a small rocky island about a half-mile off the coast where most of the population resided. The island has been connected to the mainland ever since Alexander the Great built a siege ramp to it in the late fourth century BC. The causeway has widened over the centuries, creating Tyre's current-day peninsular formation.

The Bible first mentions Tyre in a list of cities that were part of the inheritance of the tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:24–31). Fortified with a wall, Tyre held an exceedingly strong position. It was the only city in the list described as "strong" or "fortified" (verse 29). Joshua was unable to capture Tyre (Joshua 13:3–4), and, evidently, it was never conquered by the Israelites (2 Samuel 24:7).

By the time of [King David's](#) reign, Israel had formed a friendly alliance with Hiram king of Tyre. David used stonemasons and carpenters from Tyre, along with cedars from that region to build his palace (2 Samuel 5:11). Peaceful relations with [King Hiram](#) continued into Solomon's reign, with the construction of the temple in Jerusalem relying heavily on supplies, laborers, and skilled artisans from Tyre (1 Kings 5:1–14; 9:11; 2 Chronicles 2:3).

Israel continued to share close ties with Tyre during [King Ahab's](#) reign. Ahab married the Phoenician princess [Jezebel](#), daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon, and their union led to the infiltration of pagan worship and idolatry in Israel (1 Kings 16:31). Both Tyre and Sidon were notorious for their wickedness and idolatry, which resulted in numerous denunciations by Israel's prophets, who predicted Tyre's ultimate destruction (Isaiah 23:1; Jeremiah 25:22; Ezekiel 26; 28:1–19; Joel 3:4; Amos 1:9–10; Zechariah 9:2–4).

After the restoration of Jerusalem in [Nehemiah's](#) time, the people of Tyre violated the Sabbath rest by selling their goods in the markets of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 13:16).

In 332 BC, after a seven-month siege, [Alexander the Great](#) conquered Tyre, putting an end to Phoenician political control, but the city retained its economic power.

In the New Testament, Jesus mentions Tyre as an example of an unrepentant city (Matthew 11:21–22; Luke 10:13). Jesus also ministered in the district of Tyre and Sidon, healing the demon-possessed daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21–28).

The persecution that arose after Stephen's death caused the Christians in Jerusalem to scatter. As a result, a church was established in Tyre (Acts 11:19). Paul spent a week there with the disciples on the return voyage of his third missionary journey (Acts 21:2–4).

In 1291, Tyre was completely destroyed by the Saracens, eerily fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy:

"They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a



bare rock. Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. She will become plunder for the nations" (Ezekiel 26:4–5).

The island has remained a desolate ruin ever since. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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## Moody Bible Commentary on Judgment on Tyre (Ezekiel 26:1-28:19)

Ezekiel's four short prophecies against the nations east and west of Israel (chap. 25) are followed by a long prophecy against Tyre. This ancient Phoenician city-state, on the shore of the Mediterranean north of Israel, was famous for its merchants and sea trade (cf. 27:3; Isa 23). David formed a mercantile alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, who supplied materials and craftsmen for the temple (cf. 2Sm 5:11; 1Kgs 5:1; 7:13; 2Ch 2:3). Later Tyre became infamous for its idolatry (cf. Isa 23:17; Mt 11:21-22).

There are four separate oracles against Tyre, each beginning with the phrase, "The word of the LORD came to me" (Ezek 26:1; 27:1; 28:1, 11).

### 1. Destruction of Tyre: Oracle One (Ezek 26:1-21)

Ezek 26:1-2. This prophecy was given **on the first of the month** in the **eleventh year** of Jehoiakim's exile (586/587 BC). Ezekiel did not state which month, since Jerusalem fell to Babylon July 18, 586 BC. Possibly Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre was prompted by Jerusalem's impending fall.

The prophecy follows the *because-therefore* format (cf. Ezek 25:1-4, 6-7, 9-9, 12-13). Tyre's judgment was **because** of her sin of greedy rejoicing concerning the fall of Jerusalem saying, **Aha, the gateway... is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled**. Jerusalem and Tyre had vied for the lucrative trade routes between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Tyre dominated the sea routes, while Jerusalem controlled the caravan routes. Without Jerusalem controlling the overland caravan routes, more products would be shipped by sea—to Tyre's commercial advantage.

Ezek 26:3-5. God said **therefore... behold, I am against you, O Tyre**. The Lord would **bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves**. Tyre was wealthy because of her seagoing economy. So the image of a violent storm at sea describes God's judgment. As **waves** crash, so God would **destroy the walls** and **break down her towers**. He would **scrape her debris to make her a bare rock... a place for... spreading... nets**. This major city of commerce would become a smooth, barren rock where fishermen laid out their nets to dry to prevent them from rotting. Her great wealth would be given as **spoil for the nations**.

Ezek 26:6. The main city of Tyre was on the shore, but it included outlying areas of settlement further in on the **mainland** and a community on an island about a half-mile off the coast. These daughters, surrounding towns, would be **slain by the sword**, along with the citizens of the central city of Tyre.

Ezek 26:7-11. The second **thus says the Lord GOD** identifies **Nebuchadnezzar** as Tyre's attacker. After defeating Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for 13 years with **horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army**. Tyre withstood the **blow** of the **battering rams** of long siege because Tyre's navy was able to supply the city. Ultimately, Babylon destroyed all settlements on the mainland: **with the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets**, but the island stronghold survived.

Ezek 26:12-14. During the intertestamental period, Alexander the Great devastated the island settlement of Tyre when it refused to submit to him on his march to Egypt (332 BC). He built a one-and-one-half mile long causeway from the mainland to the island fortress (ED: "MOLE" ON THE DIAGRAM ABOVE). He used the stones, timbers, and debris from the rubble left from Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the old mainland city to do so, throwing them into the water (see Zech 9:3-4) just as Ezekiel prophesied here.

#### Naval action during Alexander's siege of Tyre

Island Tyre ceased to be a trade city but did become a place for the spreading of nets. By NT times, Tyre recovered from Nebuchadnezzar's and Alexander's onslaughts (cf. Mt 15:21) but was no longer a major power on the Mediterranean. Modern Tyre in Lebanon is a medium-sized city near to, but smaller than, the ancient site. **No city has been built over the ruins of ancient Tyre, in fulfillment of this prophecy.**

Ezek 26:15. Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre begins the third section of this prophecy. Tyre's neighbors, the **coastlands**, would **shake... tremble... and be appalled** when she fell. The destruction of the premier port in the

ancient world would have economic repercussions throughout the region.

Ezek 26:16-18. All the **princes** of the sea coast who had depended on Tyre's commerce would **clothe themselves** in mourning (cf. Job 2:11-13). Tyre's allies sang a **lamentation**, a funeral lament (cf. Ezek 19:1), for the **renowned city... mighty on the sea** because they were **terrified at your passing**. If this could happen to Tyre, no one was safe.

Ezek 26:19. Poetically, Tyre, the important seafaring merchant city, would sink like a great ship. **Thus says the Lord GOD** to Tyre when He makes the great seaport a **desolate city, covere[d]** over by **great waters** (cf. Ezek 26:3). Seafaring ancient Tyre would drown in the sea, and all traces of this city would be lost (cf. Ezek 27:26-35; see comments on Ezek 27:12-14).

Ezek 26:20-21. To **go down to the pit** is figurative for death and the grave (Pr 1:12; Isa 14:15, 19; 38:18). Tyre's dreadful end, **like the ancient waste places**, is contrasted to the **glory in the land of the living**. Life in the region would thrive after Tyre was forgotten. She would **never be found again**. For an in-depth discussion of the destruction of Tyre, see Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 147-48. (BORROW [Moody Bible Commentary, page 1242](#))

## TYRE: INTRODUCTION AND SCRIPTURE

### JOSH MCDOWELL

- SOURCE: [EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT - VOLUME - page 274](#) - BORROW

One of the most unusual prophecies in the Bible is that concerning the ancient city of Tyre. Probably all books in defense of Christianity will use this example, and with good reason. Soon this reason will make itself clear.

Ezekiel 26: (592-570 B.C.)

Therefore, thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you as the sea brings up its waves. "And they will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock." For thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army. "He will slay your daughters on the mainland with the sword; and he will make siege walls against you, cast up a mound against you, and raise up a large shield against you. 12. "Also they will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise, break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses, and throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water. 14. "And I will make you a bare rock; you will be a place for the spreading of nets. You will be built no more, for I the Lord have spoken," declares the Lord God. 21 "I shall bring terrors on you, and you will be no more, though you will be sought, you will never be found again," declares the Lord God. (NAS)

### 2A. PREDICTIONS

- 1B. Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the mainland city of Tyre (Ezek 26:7-8).
- 2B. Many nations against Tyre (Ezek 26:3).
- 3B. Make her a bare rock; flat like the top of a rock (Ezek 26:4)
- 4B. Fishermen will spread nets over the site (Ezek 26:5)
- 5B. Throw the debris into the water (Ezek 26:12)
- 6B. Never be rebuilt (Ezek 26:14).
- 7B. Never to be found again (Ezek 26:21).

The predictions previously mentioned seem to be self explanatory. This is the type of prophecy which sounds contradictory—fortunately history is not contradictory, so all one must do is see the story of Tyre and then compare the prophecies to it.

### 3A. FULFILLMENT

A secular source (Nina Jidejian, *Tyre Through the Ages*, Dar El-Mashreq Publishers, 1969) made this observation: "Ezekiel's denunciation (especially Ezekiel 27.27) shows how important ancient Tyre was in the eyes of the Hebrew prophet and how varied and enriching was her trade." 24/1

#### 1B. Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to mainland Tyre three years after the prophecy. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that "After a 13-year siege (585-573 B.C.) by Nebuchadnezzar II, Tyre made terms and acknowledged Babylonian suzerainty. In 538 B.C. Tyre, with the rest of Phoenicia, passed to the suzerainty of Achaemenid Persia." 15/xxii. 452

When Nebuchadnezzar broke the gates down, he found the city almost empty. The majority of the people had moved by ship to an island about one-half mile off the coast and fortified a city there. The mainland city was destroyed in 573 (**Prediction 1B**), but the city of Tyre on the island remained a powerful city for several hundred years.

Alexander's Siege of Tyre

## 2B. Alexander the Great

The next incident was with Alexander the Great. "In his war on the Persians," writes the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Alexander III, after defeating Darius III at the Battle of Issus (333), marched southward toward Egypt, calling upon the Phoenician cities to open their gates, as it was part of his general plan to deny their use to the Persian fleet. The citizens of Tyre refused to do so, and Alexander laid siege to the city. Possessing no fleet, he demolished old Tyre, on the mainland, and with the debris built a mole 200 ft. (60m.) wide across the straits separating the old and new towns, erecting towers and war engines at the farther end." (**Prediction 5B**) 15/xxii. 452

Curtius, an ancient writer (Loeb Classical Library: Quintus Curtius IV. 2. 18-19) wrote concerning the construction of the causeway by Alexander. He says much material was available from Mount Libanus (trees for beams) and the Old City of Tyre supplied stones and dirt. (**Prediction 5B**)

We can see very clearly from Arrian, a Greek historian, in [\*History of Alexander and Indica\*](#) II. 18, 19, 20 (Harvard University Press, 1954), how this great feat of conquering Tyre was accomplished. Tyre was one city divided between the mainland and an Alcatraz-like island fortress. Nebuchadnezzar took the mainland city but passed by the island city. Alexander planned, as Arrian related, to take all of Tyre. It would obviously be a massive undertaking. The island was completely surrounded by powerful walls, reaching to the very edges of the sea. The Tyrians and Alexander's enemy, the Persians under Darius, had control of the sea, but this Greek general decided to build a land peninsula out to the island. Work went well at first, but the depth increased as they progressed as did also the harassment from the Tyrians. From their high walls, the islanders could do much damage, especially when one remembers that the workers were prepared for work and not war, they wore work-clothes, not armor. Occasionally the Tyrians would stage raids on the causeway which greatly retarded progress. Arrian continues that this activity was countered by the Greeks with two tall towers built and manned directly on the mole (causeway) for protection.

The Tyrians countered here with a full-scale raid on the whole operation which was very successful; they made use of fire-ships to start the towers burning and then swarmed over the mole after the Greeks were routed. General destruction of the mole was made to as great an extent as the raiding party was capable. Arrian progressed to the sea struggle. Alexander realized he needed ships. He began pressuring and mustering conquered subjects to make ships available for this operation. Alexander's navy grew from cities and areas as follows: Sidon, Aradus, Byblus (these contributed about 80 sail), ten from Rhodes, three from Soli and Mallos, ten from Lycia, a big one from Macedon, and 120 from Cyprus. (**Prediction 2B**)

With this now superior naval force at Alexander's disposal, the conquest of Tyre through completion of the land bridge was simply a question of time, how long would this take? Darius III, Alexander's Persian enemy, was not standing idle at this time, but finally the causeway was completed, the walls were battered down, and mop-up operations began. "The causeway still remains," writes Philip Myers, "uniting the rock with the mainland. When at last the city was taken after a siege of seven months, eight thousand of the inhabitants were slain and thirty thousand sold into slavery."

The Tyrians had given good reason to arouse the hatred of the Greeks. These defenders tried every ethical and not-so-ethical tactic to repulse the siege. John C. Beck says concerning her defeat that "It was lamentable that Tyre had resisted and endured so thorough a defeat at the hands of the Greek conqueror." 4/13

Philip Myers made an interesting quote here; he is a secular historian (not a theologian) and this is found in a history textbook: "Alexander the Great...reduced it to ruins (332 B.C.). She recovered in a measure from this



blow, but never regained the place she had previously held in the world. The larger part of the site of the once great city is now bare as the top of a rock (**Prediction 3B**) —a place where the fishermen that still frequent the spot spread their nets to dry." (**Prediction 4B**) 40/55

John C. Beck keeps the history of the island city of Tyre in the proper perspective: "The history of Tyre does not stop after the conquest of Alexander. Men continue to rebuild her and armies continue to besiege her walls until finally, after sixteen hundred years, she falls never to be rebuilt again." 4/41

### 3B. Antigonus

"Returning from successful wars in Babylonia," observes Nina Jidejian (Tyre Through the Ages, Dar El-Mashreq, Publishers, 1969), "Antigonus easily reduced the cities of Phoenicia but met with firm resistance from Tyre. Eighteen years had passed since Alexander had seized Tyre and the city had recovered rapidly . . . . After a siege of fifteen months Tyre was reduced by Antigonus." 24/80, 81

Antigonus is dated 314 B.C., arithmetically. According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (p. 2499), Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) reigned from 285-247 B.C.

"However when Ptolemy Philadelphus built the harbor of Berenice on the Red Sea and made a road with stations and watering places to Coptos and reopened the canal which joined the Pelusiac branch of the Nile to the Gulf of Suez, Tyre suffered a great and permanent loss. Traffic of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean which had formerly passed through the port of Eloth to Rhinocolura in Phoenicia by way of Petra and thence to all parts of the Mediterranean by vessels of Tyre, now passed by way of the canal to Alexandria. The wealth that formerly had flowed into Tyre now found its way to Alexandria." 24/81, 82

Jidejian relates the Persian traveler Nasir-i-Khusrau's visit and description at 1047 A.D. 22/122. "They have built the city on a rock (that is in the sea) after such a manner that the town hall for one hundred yards only, is upon the dry land, and the remainder rises up from the very water. The walls are built of hewn stone, their joints being set in bitumen in order to keep the water out. I estimated the area of the town to be a thousand arsh [18 inches] square, and its caravanserais are built of five and six stories, set one above the other. There are numerous fountains of water, bazaars are very clean; also great is the quantity of wealth exposed. This city of Tyre is, in fact, renowned for wealth and power among all the maritime cities of Syria. They have erected a Mash-had (a shrine or place of martyrdom) at the city gate, where one may see great quantities of carpets and hangings and lamps and lanterns of gold and silver. The town itself stands on an eminence. Water is brought thereto from the mountain; and leading up to the town-gate they have built arches (for the aqueduct) along which the water comes into the city." 41/11, 12

### 4B. The Muslims

The city was unfortunately captured by the Muslims which caused the Crusaders to fight for it, which they did, and successfully retake the island. This place became an important base during the Crusades, but according to Joseph Michaud, it was retaken. Michaud (History of the Crusades, George Barrie, n.d.) describes the event:

"After the taking and the destruction of Ptolemais, the sultan sent one of his emirs with a body of troops to take possession of the city of Tyre; this city, seized with terror, opened its gates without resistance . . . . These cities, which had not afforded the least succour to Ptolemais, in the last great struggle, and which believed themselves protected by a truce, beheld their population massacred, dispersed, and led into slavery; the fury of the Mussulmans extended even to the stones, they seemed to wish to destroy the very earth which the Christians had trod upon; their houses, their temples, the monuments of their piety, their valour and their industry, everything was condemned to perish with them by the sword or by fire." (**Prediction 6B**) 38/213

LeStrange ([Palestine Under the Moslems](#), p. 345, cited by N. Jidejian) quoting Abu'l fiela who, in 1321 [A.D.] wrote that, "The city was reconquered by the Muslims in 690 (1291), at the same time as Acre and other coast towns, and was then laid in ruins, as it remains down to the present day." (i.e., 1321 A.D.) 24/139

LeStrange (p. 345) lists Ibn Batutah as visiting the ruins and commenting (1355), "It was formerly proverbial for its strength, being washed on three sides by the sea. Of the ancient walls and port traces remain, and of old there was a chain across the mouth of the port." (**Prediction 6B**) 22/139

Pliny the Elder makes a great summation, quoted here from Jidejian (p. 17), "Tyre...formerly famous as the mother-city from which sprang the cities of Leptis, Utica and the great rival of Rome's empire in coveting world sovereignty, Carthage, and also Cadiz, which she founded outside the confines of the world; but the entire

renown of Tyre now consists in a shellfish and a purple dye." (**Prediction 7B**) 24/5, 17, 76

## **5B. The Present Situation**

We will now see Tyre at present, as described by Nina Jidejian: "The 'Sidonian' port of Tyre is still in use today. Small fishing vessels lay at anchor there. An examination of the foundations reveals granite columns of the Roman period which were incorporated as binders in the walls by the Crusaders. The port has become a haven today for fishing boats and a place for spreading nets." 24/139

"The destiny of Tyre according to the prophet is a place where fishermen would spread their nets. The existence of a small fishing village [There is a city of Tyre today, but it is not the original city, but is built down the coast from the original site of Tyre.] upon the site of, the ancient city of Tyre does not mean that the prophecy is not fulfilled but is the final confirmation that the prophecy was fulfilled. Tyre, the mistress of the seas, the trade and commercial center of the world for centuries, passed away never to rise (re-build) again. The fishermen drying their nets upon the rocks that once formed the foundation of that ancient metropolis are the last link in the chain of prophecy that Ezekiel gave over twenty-five hundred years ago." (**Prediction 4B**) 4/47, 48

Jidejian concludes in her excellent book that Tyre's "stones may be found as far away as Acre and Beirut. Yet evidences of a great past are abundant and recent excavations have revealed successive levels of this proud Phoenician sea- port . . . . [22/xvi]

The great ancient city of Tyre lay buried under accumulated debris. The ruins of an aqueduct and a few scattered columns and the ruins of a Christian basilica were the only remains found above ground . . . . [22/2]

Looking down into the water one can see a mass of granite columns and stone blocks strewn over the sea bottom. Until recently the ruins of Tyre above water were few." 22/xvi

## **4A. SPECIFIC FULFILLMENT**

Thus was the story of the ancient city of Tyre. Now for specific fulfillment.

### **1B. Nebuchadnezzar did destroy the old (mainland) city of Tyre.**

### **2B. Many nations were against Tyre.**

This fact can be seen even in this very brief history by John C. Beck: "Because a characteristic of waves is that they come in succession with their destructive force due to their repetition and continuous pounding, this author understands Ezekiel to be referring to a succession of invaders extending over a prolonged period of time. "With this understanding, this summary of Ezekiel (verses 3-6) unfolds. First, 'they will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers' (Nebuchadnezzar's siege). Next, 'I will also scrape her dust from her and make her a bare rock' (Alexander's siege). And finally, 'she shall become a spoil to the nations' (history following the siege of Alexander)." 4/11, 12

### **3B. Alexander scraped the old site of Tyre clean when he made the causeway out to the island and left a "bare rock."**

### **4B. Numerous references have been previously made (some by secular observers) to the spreading of nets.**

Hans-Wold Rackl, describing the present situation of the site of ancient Tyre, writes: "Today hardly a single stone of the old Tyre remains intact...Tyre has become a place 'to dry fish nets,' as the prophet predicted. 47/179

### **5B. Alexander threw the debris into the water in order to make the causeway.**

"Ezekiel's prophecy," writes Joseph Free (Archaeology and Bible History, Scripture Press, 1972), "concerning the laying of the stones, the timber, and the dust in 'the midst of the water' (Ezek. 26:12b) was specifically fulfilled when Alexander's engineers built the mole, and used the remains of the ancient land city of Tyre, laying them in the midst of the water." 18/263, 264

Nina Nelson in Your Guide to Lebanon writes "The ruins of ancient Tyre are different from all the others -- situated...in the heart of the sea." 42/220

### **6B. The city was never to be rebuilt.**

*The voice of God has spoken and Old Tyre today stands*

***as it has for twenty-five centuries a bare rock, uninhabited by man!***

As for 6B, never to be rebuilt, Floyd Hamilton, The Basis of the Christian Faith, states that "It is also written, 'thou shalt be built no more' (XXVI:14). Other cities destroyed by enemies had been rebuilt; Jerusalem was destroyed many times, but always has risen again from the ruins; what reason was there for saying that Old Tyre might not be rebuilt? But twenty-five centuries ago a Jew in exile over in Babylonia looked into the future at the command of God and wrote the words, 'thou shalt be built no more!' The voice of God has spoken and Old Tyre today stands as it has for twenty-five centuries a bare rock, uninhabited by man! Today anyone who wants to see the site of the old city, can have it pointed out to him along the shore, but there is not a ruin to mark the spot. It has been scraped clean and has never been rebuilt." 20/299

"The great freshwater springs of Reselain are at the site of the mainland city of Tyre, and no doubt supplied the city with an abundance of fresh water. These springs are still there and still flow, but their water runs into the sea. The flow of these springs was measured by an engineer, and found to be about 10,000,000 gallons daily. It is still an excellent site for a city and would have free water enough for a large modern city, yet it has never been rebuilt. Thus item [6B] of the prophecy has stood true for more than 2500 years." 53/76, 77

**7B. The city was never to be found again.**

Most commentators say that the actual site of the ancient city would be forgotten or lost because of destruction. A better interpretation of this verse is that the seeking by men would be for the purpose of elevating Tyre to her former position of wealth and splendor. It is difficult to believe that the actual location of the city could be lost when it formerly occupied completely the island with walls built to the water's edge." 4/47

Some people may still have trouble accepting fulfillment of the never-be-rebuilt prediction, as well as the fishing village which is now occupying the site of ancient Tyre. No one should deny the fact of the village any more than the fact of predictive prophecy, but recall the entire prophecy, if you will. The site would be the place for spreading of nets, which it is. We must have fishermen to have the nets to have the spreading of nets. The fishermen must live somewhere, and if they spread nets on the site of the ancient city (which the prophecy says must happen), they aren't going to live ten miles down the coast, they will live where they have their nets.

Tyre was destroyed in 1291 AD and then it died forever and never was rebuilt. Something grew up from the same site, but it was no more the ancient city of Tyre than it was the city of Seattle.

Nina Nelson observes, "I went to visit Tyre on a summer's day. The town was sleepy, the harbor still. Fishing boats were putting out to sea. Pale turquoise fishing nets were drying on the shore." 42/220

Philip Ward in Touring Lebanon acknowledges: Since then [1261], agriculture and fishing, twin exercises of peaceful frugal men, have turned Tyre for the first time into a backwater." 57/68

Peter M. Stoner ([Science Speaks BORROW - see page 72](#)) evaluates this miracle in the following manner. His seven predictions were like the ones here except for my final one which he did not use and one of his which has been dropped. This, however, should not alter the idea which Stoner presents:

"If Ezekiel had looked at Tyre in his day and had made these seven predictions in human wisdom, these estimates mean that there would have been only one chance in 75,000,000 of their all coming true. They all came true in the minutest detail." 53/80

(NOTE: [BIBLIOGRAPHY NOTATIONS AT END OF EACH PARAGRAPH CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 320](#))

**PROBABILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT  
PROPHECIES BEING FULFILLED IN ONE MAN:**

Yes, one could possibly find one or two prophecies fulfilled in other men, but not all 61 major prophecies! In fact the chance of one man fulfilling even eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000) This has been illustrated by imagining placing 100,000,000,000,000 silver dollars on the State of Texas which would result in two feet "sea" of silver

wherever you tread! Now it where the odds get interesting. Mark one of the silver dollars distinctively and throw it into the state. Stir it all up and blindfold a man who has one pick to select the marked coin. That's the odds against anyone fulfilling only 8 prophecies, much less what most authorities feel is something like 330 plus Old Testament prophecies in some way fulfilled in the Messiah. To phrase it another way, these incredible odds just illustrated are the same chance that the OT prophets would have had of writing eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man providing they wrote them in their own wisdom. One can conclude that the fulfillment of even just eight prophecies proves that God inspired the writing of these prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10 to the 17th power! The odds against all 330 plus OT prophecies being fulfilled in one man cannot even be reasonably illustrated, as they are so high!

Another objection to the Messianic Prophecies pointing to Jesus is that Jesus deliberately attempted to fulfill the Jewish prophecies. This objection seems plausible until we realize that many of the details of the Messiah's coming were totally beyond human control (case in point - place of His birth, etc).

Note also that some of the prophecies concerning the Messiah are of such a nature that only God could fulfill them, such as Christ's virgin birth, His sinless and holy character, His resurrection, and His ascension. Only God could cause Jesus to be born of a virgin and to be raised from the dead.