

Robert Vannoy, Major Prophets, Lecture 25
Ezekiel – Historical Setting and Structure, Tyre

Ezekiel

A. Introductory Remarks

Let's go to Ezekiel, and notice A. of the outline is "Introductory Remarks." I think, in general, we could say Ezekiel is one of the neglected books of the Old Testament. I think Isaiah and Daniel and probably even Jeremiah of the four Major Prophets receive more attention than does Ezekiel. Perhaps the reason for that is, that Ezekiel, I think, requires a knowledge of the historical background for understanding what's going on in the book maybe more so than the others. There's a lot of symbolism in it, and that means it's hard to interpret. In addition, when you look at the first chapter, you immediately get hit with symbolic material. You have that picture of the throne chariot of God with the wheels within the wheels. The visionary experience of Ezekiel is something that is quite remote from what most of us have ever experienced. I think a lot of people read something like that and don't get any further when trying to work through the book.

I will say, if people do look at the book, it is mostly at the last parts of it. Chapters 34 to 39 perhaps to some extent, but particularly chapters 40 to 48 where you have the description of the future temple, Ezekiel's temple. But exactly how that's interpreted is a matter of a great deal of controversy. Most people pay very little attention to the first two-thirds of the book. The first two-thirds of the book deal more with Ezekiel's own situation. When you get to the latter part of the book you're looking to the future. Most people that do work with the book tend to concentrate on the prophecies of the future.

1. Ezekiel 1:2 – Date and Chronology

The book has a chronological structure that I'll say more about later, but let's begin with the second verse where you read, "On the fifth of the month--it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin--the word of the LORD came to

Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was upon him.” So Ezekiel is in captivity, exiled in Babylon, and this vision comes to him on the fifth day of the month, the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity. The date of that would be 593 B.C. We know the date of the reigns of the kings of Israel, and Judah. The fifth year of king Jehoiachin’s captivity is 593. Notice the first verse also has a rather cryptic statement that has some chronological significance, but it’s hard to know exactly what it is talking about. It says, “In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.” In the thirtieth year, fourth month, fifth day of the month, but it doesn’t say thirtieth year of what. It’s reasonable to conjecture that it’s the thirtieth year of his life and he is 30 years old. That’s probably the way it is to be understood. If that’s the case, then we know the age of Ezekiel in 593 B.C. because the second verse gives you that 593 date.

2. Historical Background Jehoiachin (597 BC) to Fall of Temple (586 BC)

Now, if you take that second verse with the 593 B.C. date in connection with what we learned from Kings and Chronicles as far as historical background, that gives the background for the book. Let’s think about that for a minute just briefly. In 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took into captivity a great number of the people of Judah, including this young King Jehoiachin who had reigned only 3 months. Then Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah on the throne in Judah. Zedekiah was Jehoiachin’s uncle. You find that in 2 Kings 24:10 and following: “At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from

the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD. He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans--a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land. The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans. He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah." So that's 597 B.C., and you're down to 593, the fifth year of Jehoiachin's reign according to the second verse in Ezekiel.

Now there were a number of deportations in this general time frame in Judah. The first of them goes back a bit earlier to 605/604 B.C., depending on which chronology you follow. In 2 Kings 24:1 you have the earliest one: "During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him," and so forth.

In that 605 B.C. deportation Daniel went to Babylon. You find that Daniel and Ezekiel are roughly contemporary. Daniel preceded Ezekiel into captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel refers to Daniel if you look at Ezekiel 14:14: "Even if these three men--Noah, Daniel and Job--were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness." That's Ezekiel 14:14 and down in 14:20 there is another reference to Daniel, "'As surely as I live,' declares the Sovereign LORD, 'even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter.'" You don't have any references in Daniel to Ezekiel but you do have an Ezekiel reference to Daniel. Although some have argued the Daniel referenced in Ezekiel is an ancient figure referred to by Ugaritic sources called Danel.

But in 605 B.C. you have the first deportation. Then the second one in 597

where Ezekiel is taken to Babylon along with Jehoiachin and about 10,000 Jews. Then, of course, the final deportation and destruction of Jerusalem is 586 B.C., which is 2 Kings 25:8-21. So you had a series of three deportations as the Jews struggled against Babylonian domination, but by 586 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed, and you get the final deportation to Babylon and destruction of the first temple. If you look at 2 Kings 23:34, “Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim.” That’s 23:34. And then verse 35, “Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh Neco the silver and gold he demanded. In order to do so, he taxed the land and exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land according to their assessments. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years.” 2 Kings 24:1 says, “During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years.” So his allegiance switches from paying tribute to Egypt to paying tribute to Babylon. And then Jehoiakim died in verse 5.

Jehoiachin is taken into captivity but in the end of the book of Kings he is released. In fact, you see that’s where I wanted to go with this, even though Zedekiah is put on the throne in place of Jehoiachin. Often you think of Zedekiah as being the last king of Judah. The Jewish people did not really share that view. To them Jehoiachin was the legitimate king. It was their expectation that Zedekiah’s rule was going to be a temporary thing. They expected that Jehoiachin would return to Judah and resume his reign, and Judah would be an independent state again. That’s what the Jewish people wanted. Zedekiah was sort of an illegitimate appointee of this foreign power. Jehoiachin was really the legitimate king in the minds of the people.

Most of those Jewish people in this time were very patriotic. They desired to return to their homeland. They desired the independence of Judah from Babylon. I’m sure you can understand those feelings. But then you see Ezekiel’s task is quite difficult for which the Lord calls Ezekiel to be a prophet. What he

has to tell them is the exile is not just a temporary misfortune. It's not something that's going to be over very shortly, but it's only just begun. Things are going to get worse, not better. This is 597 B.C. when he goes into captivity, and it's 593 when he gets this vision of the first chapter.

That's before 586 B.C. when the real crushing blow falls on Jerusalem. So Ezekiel has to warn the people in exile, and certainly his message carries back to Judah and Jerusalem, as well. Ezekiel has to tell Judah that they would again be overrun, and that Jerusalem would be destroyed and that their homeland would be totally devastated. He tells them that most of them would end up living in captivity, hundreds of miles away from home. The natural reaction of most people would be to look at Ezekiel as unpatriotic, as a traitor, or as a collaborator.

3. Significance of the Temple's Destruction

There was another problem in his historical background that Ezekiel had to face as well as the people of that time. When the Babylonians took Jerusalem, and took the king captive, it was very easy to conclude that the gods of Babylon were greater than the God of Israel. The common conception in that time was that the god of a country that was victorious in battle was the more powerful deity. Ezekiel and these ten thousand people taken to Babylon watched the processions in Babylon of these Babylonian deities and the worship at these Babylonian temples, which were very elaborate. They could be impressed with the greatness of Marduk, which is a Babylonian deity, or Nabu, another Babylonian deity. A god who could not even protect his own headquarters, as it were, Jerusalem and the temple, could be thought to be a god with not a great deal of power or significance.

Ezekiel has to tell these exiles that the temple in Jerusalem is soon to be destroyed--that's part of his message--and that there would be little left in any visible way to give assurance of the existence of the God of Israel. I think that is quite possibly the reason for the first chapter. In chapter 1, Ezekiel gets this vision

of the glory and the power of the God of Israel. It is a very impressive picture of the God of Israel. Certainly the vision made Ezekiel himself conscious of God's existence and power.

4. Ezekiel 1:4ff – Greatness of the Glory of the Lord

Let's just look at some of the sections of the first chapter, verse 4 and following, "I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north--an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved."

Down to verse 15, "As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around."

The description goes further in chapter 1, verse 22, and following: "Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. Above the expanse over their heads

was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him.”

Then in the last verse of chapter one you see, “Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.” And then you get the call, “He said to me, ‘Son of man, stand on your feet and I will speak to you.’” And he’s commissioned to give God’s word to his people.

Certainly that vision of the greatness of the glory of the Lord, in that first chapter, made an enormous impact on Ezekiel. He refers back to this vision numerous times in the book. I think what he sees is the glory and splendor of the God of Israel far surpasses the glory and splendor of the gods of Babylon. So Israel has been taken into exile, not because the gods of Babylon were stronger, but because the Lord chose to chastise the people, to bring judgment because of their sins. So that’s his historical background.

5. Structure of the Book of Ezekiel

Let’s go on to the book’s structure, still under “Introductory Remarks.” I think the book divides into these sections: in the first 3 chapters you have “Ezekiel’s vision of God and call.” The first chapter is the vision and then his call is in chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 4-24, “Messages foretelling and justifying God’s intention to bring judgment on Jerusalem.” This is leading up to the climax of the 586 B.C. judgment on Jerusalem. Then chapters 25-32, “Prophesies against foreign nations.” I’ll make some comments about that later, the way that fits into the chronology of things, but he turns from a focus on Judah and Jerusalem to prophesies against foreign nations in chapters 25-32. Then chapters 33-48 is: “Prophesies concerning Israel’s future restoration.” Instead of looking to the

immediate future and the imminent judgment, he turns to the more distant future after that judgment's been realized and speaks of future restoration. So those are the 4 basic types of material in the book. So that's all under A., "Introductory Remarks."

B. Judgment & Restoration: General Survey of Ezekiel 1-24

B. is "General survey of chapters 1-24." I'm not going to do much with 1-24. 1-24 really divides into two sections: his vision and call in 1-3 and then in 4-24 these messages about the coming judgment on Jerusalem. I think you're all aware that in those messages Ezekiel not only speaks, he also acts out in symbolic action in a number of cases the certainty of the coming judgment on Jerusalem. What I think is interesting is to note when the actual siege of Jerusalem begins. Look at 24:1 and 2. It is right at the end of that second section. "In the ninth year, in the tenth month on the tenth day, the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, record this date, this very date, because the king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.'" And if you go to 2 Kings 25:1-2 you read, "So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah." But you see, when the actual siege of Jerusalem begins, Ezekiel changes his message. He does not continue to denounce the wickedness of those people and say, "I told you so, you're getting what you deserve," or any such thing. You see it's at that point that he switches to prophecies against foreign nations. So during that period where Jerusalem is under siege and being destroyed, Ezekiel's message shifts. What he has been saying all along is now coming to pass, and now he moves onto something else. Ezekiel directs his prophecy against the foreign nations in chapters 25-32.

Then when the messenger comes to tell that the city had actually fallen, in

Ezekiel 33:21 you read, “In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, ‘The city has fallen!’” That’s Ezekiel 33:21. Once again his messages switch; chapters 33 through 48 focus now on the future. The judgment has come, and now he brings messages concerning restoration. So there’s a certain relationship between the structure of the book and the focus of the messages, and the chronology you see of what’s happening and the history of what’s happening correlate with respect to what’s going on in Jerusalem. I think that helps understand the structure of the book.

You have the statement in Ezekiel 33:22: “Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.” Yet in 3:26 were read, “I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, though they are a rebellious house.” That’s a difficult statement to know exactly how to take it. I think it’s possible that he was unable to speak except when the Lord came to him with a specific message. In other words, it does seem that those messages between chapters 3 and 24 were the only messages that were delivered but maybe he wasn’t able to speak otherwise until the judgment on Jerusalem was completed. The NIV Study Bible note there says, “His silence underscored Israel’s stubborn refusal to take God’s word seriously. This condition was relieved only after the fall of Jerusalem.” So I don’t know, but it’s probably a reasonable way to understand that.

Some think that he may have had to lie on his side for an hour or so each day for 490 days. Not that he was out there all day long, but for a period of that number of days. Others think that he may have given some indication that he maybe had a sign: day 1, day 2, day 3, and he ran through a number of days in a lesser period of time. I don’t know. It seems that to think, that he actually lay on his side 490 consecutive days, all day long, is not impossible, but one wonders if

maybe he just lay there for just a period of time each day for 490 days.

There are prophecies against foreign nations that wouldn't have taken necessarily that long to give them. "So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month," this is 2 Kings 25:1, "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat." and so forth. So you go from the ninth year to the eleventh year of Zedekiah, so it was fairly lengthy two year siege.

C. Judgment Against Foreign Nations – Ezekiel 25-32 esp. Prophecy Against Tyre

Let's go on to Ezekiel chapters 25-32. I want to look at a few passages here. That's in this section of "Judgment against foreign nations." There's some interesting prophecies there. The first one that I would like to look at with you is in chapter 26. I think we should read the chapter, at least the first 14 verses.

This is Ezekiel 26: "A Prophecy Against Tyre." "In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, "Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper," therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O 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, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. She will become plunder for the nations, and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD. For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a

great army. He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you. He will direct the blows of his battering rams against your walls and demolish your towers with his weapons. His horses will be so many that they will cover you with dust. Your walls will tremble at the noise of the war horses, wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city whose walls have been broken through. The hoofs of his horses will trample all your streets; he will kill your people with the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea. I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more. I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Now some of you may be familiar with these prophecies of Tyre. Years ago the Moody Science Film organization produced a film on this prophecy of Tyre and used it as sort of an apologetic argument for the prophecy/fulfillment theme in Scripture to show the existence and truthfulness of the God of Israel when he speaks in advance about things that were long-termed to be fulfilled. It’s often been cited as an example of a prophecy that was demonstrably fulfilled in a remarkable way.

However, it’s interesting that there are also people who use this prophecy in exactly the reverse sense, as an example of the unreliability of Old Testament prophecy based on the claim that Ezekiel is demonstrably false in what he says will happen here. It historically didn’t come to pass the way that he said. If you look at that material I just gave you, page 50, there’s an entry there from Gordon Oxtoby, *Prediction and Fulfillment in the Bible*, pages 79 and 80. Notice what he says: “But Nebuchadrezzar did not take Tyre, his siege failed. Ezekiel himself realized that this was the case and therefore made a new predication at a later date

in which he admitted that Nebuchadnezzar made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, every shoulder was rubbed bare. Neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against it. “Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, ‘behold I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar. And he shall carry off his wealth and the spoil and plunder and it shall be the wages for his army.’” That’s Ezekiel 29:18 and 19. Then Oxtoby says, “It is a matter of sober historical record we may add that the siege of Tyre lasted for about 13 years from 585 to 572, but was unsuccessful. Part of Tyre was on an island half a mile offshore now joined by a sand spit to the mainland. The Tyrians were able to hold off the enemy and eventually came to terms with Nebuchadnezzar. But the city was not conquered or destroyed, never to be rebuilt as Ezekiel had previously predicted.” So then you go back to the passage and you ask: Is that what it says? Is Oxtoby right? What do we do about that?

See, Oxtoby contends that Ezekiel was mistaken in predicting that Nebuchadnezzar would bring Tyre to its final end because that siege was not successful and he did not destroy the city. So the Tyrians eventually came to terms with Nebuchadnezzar. But the city was not conquered or destroyed as Ezekiel had predicted. But then the question is: Did Ezekiel say that Nebuchadnezzar would bring Tyre to its final end?

If you look closer at the prophecy, there are several things to notice. I think it’s true in chapter 26, verses 12 to 14, where it says, “They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea. I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more. I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.” Verse 14, “I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt.” Nebuchadnezzar did not fulfill the things in verses 12 and 14. He didn’t take the merchandise, that’s verse 12. He didn’t set the

debris of the city into the water, as in the latter part of verse 12: “they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea.” Nebuchadnezzar did not do that. Verse 14: He didn’t level the city like a top of a rock never to be rebuilt. But I think what Oxtoby has done, even though I think that is clear, is to miss-read the text. If you go back earlier to verse 3 where it’s introduced, notice it says, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves.” And verse 4 says, “They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers.” It’s many nations that are going to do that. So you might say in fact if Nebuchadnezzar had done it, then verses 3 and 4 would have been incorrect, because it wouldn’t have been many nations--it would have been one nation.

But I think what happens in this prophesy is that Ezekiel, beginning with verse 7, speaks of Nebuchadnezzar as part of a succession of attacks against Tyre and you notice with verse 7 where he says, “I will bring Nebuchadnezzar onto Tyre.” The pronoun switches from “they,” plural, to third masculine singular; so that in verse 8 it says, “He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field. He shall make a fort against thee, and cast a siege mount.” Nebuchadnezzar did lay siege to Tyre. “He shall set engines of wars against thy wall.” And verse 11, “He shall slay thy people with the sword, thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.” So from verses 7 through 11 you have a third masculine singular but in verse 12 it switches back to the plural. You see in 12 it’s “they.” It’s the plural pronoun in 12 as it was in verse 4: “many nations, they shall destroy the walls.” Verse 12 then, “They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise.” So I think in the prophecies of verse 12 to 14, which are the things that are not fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar, what is in view is not just Nebuchadnezzar, but the many nations. That’s where historically it is rather interesting to look at what happened to Tyre.

I’m saying verses 3 and 4 speak of many nations as “they” and then verses

7 through 11 speak specifically of Nebuchadnezzar. But then with verse 12 it seems to switch back to “many nations,” the “they.”

When you look at 12 to 14, where you’re back to the “they,” and particularly the last part of 12, “they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea,” historically it’s clear that happened in 332 B.C. when Alexander the Great laid siege to Tyre. Tyre was composed of a mainland city and an island city off the mainland. Nebuchadnezzar had broken down the walls of the mainland city and killed many of the inhabitants, but a lot of the people fled to that island city off the coast. They continued living there since he wasn’t able to do anything about the island city. So that when Alexander comes against Tyre, that island city was still a thriving port, while the mainland city was mostly in ruins. But the island city was a thriving place.

Then you have this rather strange prophesy, “They shall lay your stones, your timber, your dust in the midst of the water.” Why would anybody do that? Look at page 49 of your citations. I have several paragraphs there from James Free’s *Archeology and Bible History*: “Ezekiel had prophesied that, ‘They shall lay your stones, your timber, your dust in the midst of the water and that Tyre would be made like the top of a rock, useful as only a place to spread nets upon.’ How amazing to take the worthless remains of a city and place in the midst of the water. Surely the manpower could be put to a more useful task than that.

Alexander and Tyre

The fulfillment however came in the campaign of Alexander against Tyre. When Alexander first approached the island city of Tyre, there was a willingness to surrender, but when he demanded permission to enter the city and offer worship at the temple of the god of Melkart, he was refused. The citizens of Tyre declined to accept his request on the grounds that they wished to maintain neutrality in the conflict between Macedonia and Persia. Alexander began a siege of the city and

found it necessary to labor for 7 months before capturing it. He determined to build a land bridge, or mole, using cedars from the Lebanon mountains as piles, and the debris from the old land city as material for the mole. As the water became deeper further out, the difficulties of the workmen increased. They were also hindered in every possible way by the people of Tyre who had a good navy. In order to meet this challenge, Alexander left the construction of the mole to his army engineers, went north to collect ships, ships of Arabus and Byblos on the coast of Syria. He went to the kings of Arabus and Byblos, who placed their ships at his disposal. From the island of Cyprus he was able to secure 120 ships and from Sidon about 80. With a fleet of some 220 war ships, Alexander was more than a match for the sizable yet smaller fleet of the Tyrians. After 7 months the mole was brought up to the walls of the island city of Tyre. In August 332 B.C. the wall was breached from the mole and part of the fleet of Tyre was sunk. With the capture of the city, thousands of the inhabitants were sold into the slave market, 13,000 according to Arius; 30,000 according to Diodorus. Ezekiel's prophecy concerning the laying of the stones, the timber and the dust in the midst of the water 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."

So the end of verse 12 there, you find a remarkable fulfillment in the time of Alexander, however verses 13 and 14 weren't really completely fulfilled even at that point because you read, "I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more. I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD." That was not the end of the city of Tyre in the time of Alexander despite that conquest and his taking of the island city. The mainland city continued after that time and an element of it remained.

Alexander pretty much destroyed the island city, but there were still remnants of people there living at the site of the mainland city. Under the

Seleucides it recovered and it continued to exist under the Romans, and even down into the time of Muslim control and the Crusader's taking of the place. It was finally destroyed in 1292 by the Saracens. They were Arab Muslims in the early Middle Ages there, around 1292. It never recovered from that blow. And it has remained unoccupied to this day.

Look at page 48, bottom of the page. Unfortunately, the first sentence here was left out of the typing of this. But this is from the article on Tyre from the Encyclopedia Britannica. That quotation should begin this way, "The city passed successively under the sway of the Seleucides about 198 B.C. and the Romans, 68 B.C. Jesus visited the area of Tyre and Sidon. (Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-31.) Paul spent a week at Tyre with fellow Christians while a ship unloaded his cargo (Acts 21:3-7) on his journey from Ephesus to Jerusalem. In Roman time, the city was famous for the manufacture of silk and silken garments as well as from Tyrian purple derived from the snails of the genus Murex. By the Second Century A.D., Tyre had become the seat of a bishop. The scholar Origen was buried there about 254. Eusebius of Caesarea delivered a sermon there on God's creation in 323 A.D. In 638 the city was captured by the Muslims. It was taken by the Crusaders in 1124. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa drowned in 1190 and was buried in the Crusader's cathedral. In 1291 the Muslims recaptured and destroyed the city, and that's the end of the city of Tyre, 1291." So you see, as far as fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel, beginning at verse 3 and 4, "Many nations are going to come up against you. They shall destroy Tyre." Verses 13 and 14 ultimately, it's "they" that will cause the sound of the harps to cease and make it like the top of a rock, never again to be inhabited. So you see fulfillment is a long succession of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the Romans and the Muslims and the Crusaders until it's finally destroyed. Today is not an inhabited site.

Destruction of Sidon

Now, just one final note then we'll take a break. In contrast to that

prophecy against Tyre, look at the prophecy against Sidon, which is the sister city of Tyre. That's in chapter 28, verses 21 and following: "Son of man, set your face against Sidon; prophesy against her and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I am against you, O Sidon, and I will gain glory within you. They will know that I am the LORD, when I inflict punishment on her and show myself holy within her. I will send a plague upon her and make blood flow in her streets. The slain will fall within her, with the sword against her on every side. Then they will know that I am the LORD."'" Sidon is the sister city to Tyre. The prophecy against Tyre predicts eradication of the city never to be rebuilt, but in the case of Sidon, Ezekiel says there's going to be a squatter in its streets. He says nothing about Sidon's being eradicated as a city, never to be rebuilt. There's going to be blood in their streets.

The interesting thing is, today, if you go to the Phoenician (or Lebanese) coast, you will find that Sidon is still an inhabited site. Sidon continues in existence with a population of 50 thousand people. It's a prominent place. Tyre is unoccupied, so again, I think in this, you do have an example of a remarkable prediction that shows the existence and veracity of the God of biblical revelation.

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