
EZEKIEL 26: 1 In the eleventh year, in the first of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

This prophecy, beginning here and ending in the twentieth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter, is a declaration of the judgments of God against Tyre, a very famous commercial city of antiquity, which was taken by Nebuchadnezzar after an arduous siege of thirteen years. The prophet begins with introducing Tyre insulting Jerusalem, and congratulating herself on the prospect of accession to her commerce now that this city was no more, Eze 26:1, Eze 26:2. Upon which God denounces utter destruction to Tyre, and the cities depending on her, Eze 26:3-6. We have then a particular account of the person raised up in the course of the Divine providence to accomplish this work. We see, as it were, his mighty hosts, (which are likened to the waves of the sea for their multitude), raising the mounds, setting the engines, and shaking the walls; we hear the noise of the horsemen, and the sound of their cars; we see the clouds of smoke and dust; we see the sword bathed in blood, and hear the groans of the dying. Tyre, (whose buildings were very splendid and magnificent, and whose walls were one hundred and fifty feet in height, with a proportionable breadth), immediately disappears; her strong (and as she thought impregnable) towers are thrown down; and her very dust is buried in the sea. Nothing remains but the bare rock, Eze 26:7-14. The scene is then varied. The isles and adjacent regions, by a very strong and beautiful figure, are represented to be shaken, as with a mighty earthquake by violent concussion occasioned by the fall of Tyre. The groans of the dying reach the ears of the people inhabiting these regions. Their princes, alarmed for themselves and grieved for Tyre, descend from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and clothe themselves with sackcloth? - no, but with trembling! Arrayed in this astonishing attire, the prophet introduces them as a chorus of mourners, lamenting Tyre in a funeral song or dirge, as customary on the death of renowned personages. And pursuing the same image still farther, in the person of God, he performs the last sad office for her. She is brought forth from her place in solemn pomp; the pit is dug for her; and she is buried, to rise no more, Eze 26:15-21. Such is the prophecy concerning Tyre, comprehending both the city on the continent and that on the island, and most punctually fulfilled in regard to both. That on the continent was razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar, b.c. 572, and that on the island by Alexander the Great, b.c. 332. And at present, and for ages past, this ancient and renowned city, once the emporium of the world, and by her great naval superiority the center of a powerful monarchy, is literally what the prophet has repeatedly foretold it should be, and what in his time was, humanly speaking, so highly improbable - a Bare rock, a place to spread nets on!

Verse 1

The eleventh year - This was the year in which Jerusalem was taken; the eleventh of the captivity of Jeconiah, and the eleventh of the reign of Zedekiah. What month we are not told, though the day is mentioned. There have been many conjectures about this, which are not of sufficient consequence to be detailed.

EZEKIEL 26: 2 Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken: the gate of the peoples; she is turned to me; I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste:

Verse 2

Tyrus hath said - From this it would appear that Jerusalem had been taken, which was on the fourth month of this year; but it is possible that the prophet speaks of the event beforehand.

She is broken that was the gates of the people - Jerusalem, a general emporium.

I shall be replenished - The merchandise that went to Jerusalem will come to me, (to Tyre.).

EZEKIEL 26: 3 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against you, Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up.

Verse 3

Will cause many nations to come up against thee - We have already seen that the empire of the Chaldeans was composed of many different provinces, and that Nebuchadnezzar's army was composed of soldiers from different nations: these may be the people meant; but I doubt whether this may not refer to the different nations which in successive ages fought against Tyre. It was at last finally destroyed in the sixteenth century of the Christian era.

EZEKIEL 26: 4 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.

Verse 4

I will also scrape her dust from her - I will totally destroy her fortifications, and leave her nothing but a barren rock, as she was before. This cannot refer to the capture of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. It flourished long after his time.

EZEKIEL 26: 5 She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, says the Lord GOD; and she shall become a plunder to the nations.

Verse 5

A place for the spreading of nets - A place for the habitation of some poor fishermen, who spent the fishing season there, and were accustomed to dry their nets upon the rocks. See on Eze 26:11 (note).

EZEKIEL 26: 6 Her daughters who are in the field shall be slain with the sword: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Verse 6

And her daughters - The places dependent on Tyre. As there were two places called Tyre, one on the main land, and the other on a rock in the sea, opposite to that on the main land, sometimes the

one seems to be spoken of, and sometimes the other. That on the land, Palaetyre, was soon taken; but that in the sea cost Nebuchadnezzar thirteen years of siege and blockade. The two formed only one city, and one state.

EZEKIEL 26: 7 For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring on Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and a company, and many people.

Verse 7

Nebuchadrezzar - king of kings - An ancient title among those proud Asiatic despots shahinshah and padshah, titles still in use.

EZEKIEL 26: 8 He shall kill your daughters in the field with the sword; and he shall make forts against you, and cast up a mound against you, and raise up the buckler against you.

Verse 8

Thy daughters in the field - This seems to be spoken of Palaetyre, or Tyre on the main land; for forts, mounts, engines of war, horses, and chariots could not be brought to act against the other.

EZEKIEL 26: 9 He shall set his battering engines against your walls, and with his axes he shall break down your towers.

EZEKIEL 26: 10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover you: your walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wagons, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into your gates, as men enter into a city in which is made a breach.

EZEKIEL 26: 11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all your streets; he shall kill your people with the sword; and the pillars of your strength shall go down to the ground.

EZEKIEL 26: 12 They shall make a plunder of your riches, and make a prey of your merchandise; and they shall break down your walls, and destroy your pleasant houses; and they shall lay your stones and your timber and your dust in the midst of the waters.

Verse 12

And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water - This answers to the taking of Tyre by Alexander; he actually took the timbers, stones, rubbish, etc. of old Tyre, and filled up the space between it and new Tyre, and thus connected the latter with the main land; and this he was obliged to do before he could take it.

EZEKIEL 26: 13 I will cause the noise of your songs to cease; and the sound of your harps shall be no more heard.

EZEKIEL 26: 14 I will make you a bare rock; you shall be a place for the spreading of nets; you shall be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 14

Thou shalt be built no more - If this refer to Nebuchadnezzar's capture of the city, old Tyre must be intended: that was destroyed by him, and never rebuilt. But I doubt whether the whole of this prophecy do not refer to the taking of Tyre by Alexander, three hundred years after its capture by Nebuchadnezzar. Indeed it may include more recent conquests of this important city. It went through a variety of vicissitudes till 1289, when it and the neighboring towns were sacked and ravaged by the Mamelukes. Mr. Maundrell, who visited this place, says, "it is a Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, etc., there being not so much as one entire house left! Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on."

EZEKIEL 26: 15 Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: shall not the islands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when the slaughter is made in your midst?

Verse 15

The isles shake at the sound of thy fall - All those which had traded with this city, which was the grand mart, and on which they all depended. Her ruin involved them all, and caused general wailing.

EZEKIEL 26: 16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit on the ground, and shall tremble every moment, and be astonished at you.

Verse 16

The princes of the sea - The chief maritime states, such as Leptis, Utica, Carthage, Gades, etc. See Calmet.

EZEKIEL 26: 17 They shall take up a lamentation over you, and tell you, How you are destroyed, who were inhabited by seafaring men, the renowned city, who was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, who caused their terror to be on all who lived there!

Verse 17

Wast strong in the sea - The strength of Tyre was so great, that Alexander despaired of being able to reduce it unless he could fill up that arm of the sea that ran between it and the main land. And this work cost his army seven months of labor.

EZEKIEL 26: 18 Now shall the islands tremble in the day of your fall; yes, the islands that are in the sea shall be dismayed at your departure.

EZEKIEL 26: 19 For thus says the Lord GOD: When I shall make you a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep on you, and the great waters shall cover you;

EZEKIEL 26: 20 then I will bring you down with those who descend into the pit, to the people of old time, and will make you to dwell in the lower parts of the earth, in the places that are desolate of old, with those who go down to the pit, that you be not inhabited; and I will set glory in the land of the living:

Verse 20

And I shall set glory in the land of the living - Judea so called, the land of the living God.

EZEKIEL 26: 21 I will make you a terror, and you shall no more have any being; though you are sought for, yet you will never be found again, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 21

Yet shalt thou never be found again - This is literally true; there is not the smallest vestige of the ancient Tyre, that which was erected on the main land. Even the ground seems to have been washed away; and the new Tyre is in nearly a similar state. I think this prophecy must be extended to the whole duration of Tyre. If it now be found to be in the state here described, it is sufficient to show the truth of the prophecy. And now it is found precisely in the state which the above prophetic declarations, taken according to the letter, point out! No word of God can ever fall to the ground.

Notwithstanding the former destructions, Tyre was a place of some consequence in the time of St. Paul. There was a Church there, (see Act 21:3, Act 21:4, etc.), which afterwards became famous. Calmet observes, it afforded a great number of martyrs for the Christian Church.