



Welcome back!

Let's pray.

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The slide features a vertical banner on the left with the word 'EZEKIEL' in white capital letters against a dark background with a glowing light effect. The main title 'OVERVIEW' is in a blue box at the top center. Below it, the subtitle 'The Fall of Tyre and Sidon (Ezek 26-28)' is followed by a bulleted list of six topics. At the bottom, there is a date '02/02/2018', a name 'B. G. Hirsch - Ezekiel 26-28', and a small page number '2'.

In this lesson we will study chapters 26, 27, and 28 of the book of Ezekiel.

This is a very challenging section of the Book of Ezekiel for various reasons. The fulfillment of certain of the prophecies that we will study are hotly debated. Some of the interpretations of the text, particularly in chapter 28, are also questioned and debated.

In preparing for this study, I have read several commentaries and archeological summaries regarding the history and the evidence for the prophecies in these chapters.

I am not going to attempt a detailed treatise on this material. Instead, I will give you my view along with references to the issues, and I will remind you to be Bereans, and do your own study. I trust and am satisfied with the truth of the Bible. These kind of issues just give us an opportunity to dive deeper into God's Word.

That being said, we will look into the history of the cities of Tyre and Sidon, and we will hear what the LORD has to say through Ezekiel about their sin and the LORD's judgment.

We will also get an assessment from the LORD of the King of Tyre that should provide you with a lot of food for thought.

Lastly, we will once more hear the LORD's promise to restore Israel.

As always, feel free to ask questions or comment at any time.

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Review

- Ezekiel, a priest, a prophet, and a watchman in Babylon continues his ministry to the exiles – now 587 B.C.
- Siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar began – Jerusalem called a boiling pot
- Ezekiel's wife dies – Ezekiel can't mourn
- Escapee will come to Ezekiel, and Ezekiel will no longer be mute
- God's judgment on Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia

02/02/2018
B. G. Hirsch - Ezekiel 26-28
3

Let's review.

Ezekiel, a priest from Jerusalem, was taken to Babylon 11 years ago in Nebuchadnezzar's second conquest in 598 B.C. During his time in Babylon, Ezekiel, as the LORD's prophet and watchman has been giving the LORD's message of judgment upon the nation of Israel to the exiles in Babylon. The final siege of Jerusalem is either over or nearly so, and it is around the end of 587 B.C. as we begin our study.

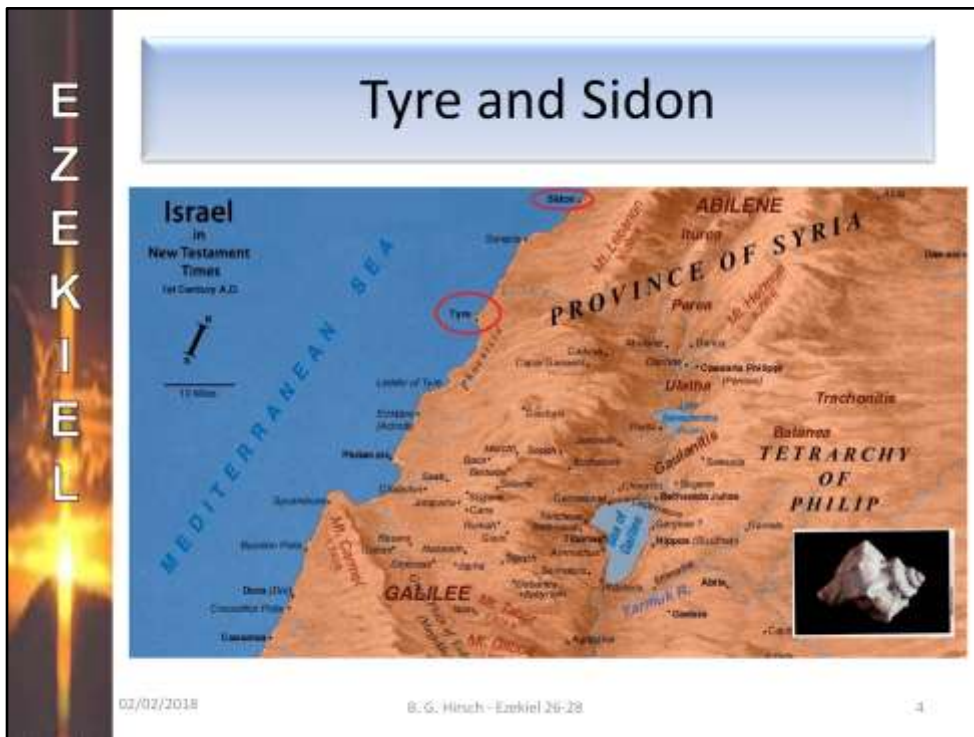
The last time we met, we saw that the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar had finally begun in 588 B.C. The LORD likened the city of Jerusalem to a boiling pot where the contents would be heated until there was nothing left. This signaled the end of Jerusalem and the death or exile of its inhabitants.

We also heard about the death of Ezekiel's wife and why the LORD commanded Ezekiel not to mourn her publicly. We also acknowledged that, for the time being, the people of the covenant had been removed from their Promised Land.

The LORD also told Ezekiel to expect a visit from an escapee from Jerusalem's destruction. And once Ezekiel heard that Jerusalem had fallen, Ezekiel would no longer be mute.

Next, we moved on from the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem to God's judgment for the surrounding nations. And, we learned that the LORD intended to bring destruction to Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines.

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Here is a map showing the location of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre and Sidon were city-states that were located on the coast of Phoenicia, which is in the nation of Lebanon today. Tyre was approximately 20 miles south of Sidon.

Ezekiel speaks more about Tyre than any other prophet. Jeremiah mentions Tyre and Sidon in chapter 27: 1-11.

The name "Phoenicia" comes from the Greek word for purple, due to the rare purple dye that was produced by these cities. Tyre was the primary producer of the dye, and it was called Tyrian purple. The dye was made from the murex shellfish (shown in the lower right corner of the slide), and it was extremely expensive, as it took thousands of shellfish to produce one ounce of the dye. Royalty and nobility wore purple clothing produced from this dye, and it was a sign of their wealth and royalty.

Both Tyre and Sidon were of ancient origin, with Sidon being older, but Tyre (founded in 2750 BC) was the more famous at least in Ezekiel's day. This is evident from Ezekiel giving Sidon 4 verses and Tyre most of three chapters.

Both cities were centers of wealth and trade and they had major harbors. And both cities are mentioned in a number of extra-biblical documents (e.g. Josephus, the Amarna Letters, the Iliad, and the Odyssey). The Phoenicians were renowned as sailors and they had formidable militaries that were greatly feared in ancient times.

Tyre consisted of two cities. One city, called Palae-Tyrus, which means old Tyre, or Ushu, was on the mainland, and the other city was on an island about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile off the coast, across from the mainland city. Tyre was called Tsor or "rock" in Hebrew.

There is no mention of Israel fighting a war with either city-state. Rather, there were cordial relations between these two cities and Israel. This is evidenced by King Hiram of Tyre helping King David to build his palace, and King Solomon to build the Temple.

Both cities were mentioned in Joshua 19:28-29 as part of the boundaries for the tribe of Asher, where they are called "Sidon the Great" and the "fortified city of Tyre".

Joel 3:4-5 and Amos 1:9-10 make it clear that Tyre and Sidon profited from the conquest of Judah by Babylon and possibly by the earlier Egyptian and Assyrian conquests. It appears that they sold Jewish people as slaves.

So it is, that we come to chapter 26 of Ezekiel, where the LORD has a few things to say to these cities.
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EZEKIEL

Judgment of Tyre

- Tyre has taken/will take advantage of the fall of Jerusalem
- Many nations will come against Tyre in waves, including Babylon, and Greece
- Ultimately, Tyre will be destroyed and be like a bare rock with stones and timbers cast into the sea
- Great lamentation (qiynah) from the nations that traded with her
- Tyre “shall be no more”

03/02/2018
B. G. Hinsch - Ezekiel 26-28
5

Let's read chapter 26 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 21. (*Read verses 1-21.*)

Notice that Ezekiel in the prelude to chapter 26 gives the year and the day, but not the month. This has resulted in various commentators making assumptions as to when this material occurred. As none of these efforts appear particularly compelling to me, I will just say that this takes place in 587 B.C. either after the siege or very close to the end. It is possible that this is not in chronological order, as we will see in chapter 29. But I believe, based upon chapter 33:21, that this is prior to the escapee from Jerusalem coming to Ezekiel, after which Ezekiel would no longer be mute.

The word of the LORD comes to Ezekiel regarding Tyre. And the LORD says that Tyre has said that Jerusalem's gate is broken, which means that Tyre can now replenish itself (i.e. profit) from Jerusalem's destruction. As I stated before, it appears from Joel and Amos that Tyre sold Jewish survivors as slaves in their markets.

Therefore, the LORD says that He will send many nations like waves upon Tyre. This is a controversial area of the narrative. Critics say that only two nations, Babylon and Greece, came against Tyre, and that this is not “many” like waves. However, both the Babylonian and later Greek armies included other nations such as the Assyrians. Hence, there were multiple nations, and they did come against Tyre over many years, as we will see in a moment.

God says that the various assaults will result in Tyre being reduced to bare rock with her timbers and stones being cast into the sea. The wealth of Tyre will become plunder to the nations, and the Tyre will become a place where fisherman dry their nets.

The LORD states that He will first bring Nebuchadnezzar against Tyre, and this is what occurred. In 585 BC Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for 13 years! It is not clear whether Nebuchadnezzar actually destroyed the city or just forced them to pay tribute. However, 250 years later, Alexander the Great laid siege to the island city of Tyre in 322 BC for 7 months. At that point the mainland city was in ruins, so either Nebuchadnezzar eventually destroyed the city, or some interim invaders such as Persia, which destroyed Sidon, reduced the city to rubble.

How do we know this? Because, Alexander took the stones, timber, and rubble of old Tyre, and cast them into the sea as the LORD says in verse 12. Alexander did this to build a 200 foot wide causeway out to the island city of Tyre, to which the mainland people had retreated during Nebuchadnezzar's siege. Alexander then destroyed the island city, which has not been rebuilt. A mainland Tyre was built, although not necessarily in the same location. This is also an issue with various critics. However, the area now called Sur is a location for fishing and a place where their nets are dried, as the LORD said.

The LORD also said that the rulers of the nations that traded with and knew of Tyre will raise a lamentation because of Tyre's destruction. This would be similar to a major port city today such as New York, Shanghai, Hong Kong, or Rotterdam being destroyed. As we saw in chapter 19, the word lamentation in Hebrew is “Qiyah”, which means funeral dirge.

There will be a vast display of mourning for Tyre. This was a very significant city in that day, and it was a major trading partner for the world, reaching from Spain to the Persian Gulf. If you think about the economic troubles from 911, and consider how much worse it would have been if New York had been entirely destroyed, then you will have a sense of the impact of Tyre's destruction.

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Tyre Merchant of the Seas

- "I am perfect in beauty."
- Tyre is like a magnificent ship
- Tyre's wealth and trade were extensive
- An "east wind" will wreck the ship (city)
- A great lamentation (qiynah) will be raised after the fall of Tyre

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6

Let's read chapter 27 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 36. (*Read verses 1-36.*)

Chapter 27 is in primarily a more detailed description of the material we just covered in chapter 26. We are given a deeper picture of the city of Tyre and its wealth by likening the city to a ship. We are then told once more about the tremendous lamentation that will occur when Tyre is no more.

Chapter 27 takes the form of a lament in the same format as the lament that we discussed in chapter 19. There is

1. A direct address to the deceased
2. A description of the deceased's past greatness
3. A call to others to take notice and to mourn – and -
4. An expression of the extent of the tragedy

It is immediately apparent that Tyre's great sin is pride. Remember this for the next chapter. Tyre says of herself that "I am perfect in beauty." Recall Proverbs 16:18, "***Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.***"

We are then given an extensive description of Tyre's beauty as though she were the finest and most beautifully appointed of ships. Only the best of materials are used. The greatest men and finest warriors sail in her, and many of the greatest nations trade and profit from Tyre's wealth and seafaring trade.

An "east wind" will wreck the ship. This is symbolic of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army coming from the east to lay siege to Tyre. When Alexander's army came, all the Phoenician cities to the north, including Sidon, welcomed Alexander. But Tyre did not welcome Alexander and resisted him to their eventual destruction.

Because of the extent of her wealth and trade, Tyre's demise will be sorely felt around the world. And all the merchants and powerful will be shocked and devastated.

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Downfall of Tyre's King

- King's "heart is proud"
- Says, "I am a god"
- The LORD says, "you are a man, and no god..."
- Wiser than Daniel, wisdom has made him wealthy, gathered gold and silver, has become proud in his wealth
- God will bring foreign nations to thrust him down to the pit

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7

Let's read chapter 28 of Ezekiel verses 1 – 10. *(Read verses 1-10.)*

Now the scene shifts from an emphasis on the city of Tyre to the King of Tyre. The term prince used here is synonymous with ruler or king.

The LORD tells Ezekiel to speak to the King of Tyre. However, Ezekiel will not be able to speak directly to the King of Tyre, as Ezekiel is in Babylon hundreds of miles away. It may be that Ezekiel's message was sent or delivered by someone traveling to Tyre, but we don't have any indication of that. Instead, I believe that Ezekiel, as he has done for this entire period, gives the message to the exiles in Babylon.

The LORD says that the King of Tyre's heart is proud, and the King fancies himself, and has said of himself, that he is a god. However, the LORD says that the king is nothing but a man and not a god.

It is interesting that the king thinks that he is wiser than Daniel, and that no secret is hidden from him. This indicates that Daniel was internationally famous. We know from the book of Daniel that Daniel was high up in the court of Nebuchadnezzar. The LORD already referred to Daniel in Ezekiel chapter 14. Daniel was actively engaged in affairs of state, and apparently Daniel's abilities and wisdom were well enough known for the King of Tyre to make his boast.

God declares that the king had become proud because of his success and great wealth. It was not the wealth that was the king's sin. It was ascribing the source of his wealth to himself and not to the LORD. Do you remember Nebuchadnezzar's sin of pride?

Therefore, because of the king's proud heart, the LORD will bring foreign armies to destroy the king's splendor. And the LORD asks the king with great irony, if the king will say to the soldiers that kill him, "I am a god." but the LORD says that the king will be a man and not a god in the hands of those that kill him.

The LORD says the king will die the death of those that are slain in the heart of the seas. In Hebrew this means that the king will die a violent death pierced in the midst of the sea.

The LORD also says that the king will die the death of the uncircumcised, which doesn't seem very relevant, since the king is not a Hebrew. However, the Phoenicians practiced circumcision, so this was additionally degrading. (next slide)

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Lament for Tyre's King

- Ezekiel to raise a lamentation for the King of Tyre
- God actually describes the power behind the king of Tyre – Satan
- In Eden
- Anointed cherub (ker-ooov') that covers
- Cast to the ground
- He will come to a dreadful end

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Let's read chapter 28 of Ezekiel verses 11 – 19. (*Read verses 11-19.*)

Once again, the LORD tells Ezekiel to raise a lamentation, a *qiyah*. This time Ezekiel's lamentation is for the King of Tyre. However, it quickly becomes clear that Ezekiel is not addressing the human King of Tyre, but the power behind the throne, which is Satan. Remember that even Peter was influenced by Satan in Matthew 16:23.

Please note that this is controversial. One of the commentaries that I am using, by Douglas Stuart, as well as other on-line sources do not agree with this assessment. They believe that the language in this section is figurative and poetic and does not refer to the evil one. However, I strongly disagree. Note that the LORD is not using metaphors (i.e. as and like) in this section. The LORD does not say, "*It was as though* you were in Eden" He says, "You were in Eden". The LORD does not say "You were like an anointed guardian cherub." He says, "You were an anointed guardian cherub." It is not at all consistent with the LORD to make several direct and clear statements of fact that we should then treat as being symbolic and flowery speech. Compare this section to Isaiah 14: 12-17.

Do you think the King of Tyre was covered with every precious stone?

When the LORD says that "You were in Eden, the garden of God;" you can be certain that this not the King of Tyre. Other than the LORD, there were only three beings in the Garden of Eden: Adam, Eve, and "the Shining One". Who might that be? Perhaps a being covered with every precious stone. Nobody else has been back since.

The LORD says that He cast him from the mountain of God, and that He cast him to the ground. Compare this with Isa 14:12 (ESV) which says:

¹²"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star (*i.e. Lucifer*) , son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

The Lord says that the being in question was blameless or perfect until unrighteousness or iniquity was found in him. Sin began with Satan, and Satan's sin was pride. Satan is a created being, and he is no match for his creators, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the future, as described in the Book of Revelation, Satan will be exposed for what he is, and he will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever. For now it is wise for us to be aware of his tactics without being too preoccupied with him.

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Tyre (Sur) Today



02/02/2018


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9

The upper left photo is a picture of the modern city of Tyre today. The city is called Sur. However, this city is not built over the ruins of the ancient city of Tyre, and the ruins of ancient Tyre shown here are of the Roman city as can be seen in excavated locations such as the lower right photo.

One note that I saw said that "Today Tyre is a depressed city that suffered greatly during Lebanon's civil war and Israel's subsequent occupation of southern Lebanon."

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Pestilence in Sidon

- Ezekiel told to prophesy against Sidon
- The LORD is against Sidon
- The LORD will manifest His glory in Sidon
- Sidon will have pestilence and blood in the streets from the sword
- The attack will come from every side

02/02/2018

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10

Let's read chapter 28 of Ezekiel verses 20 – 23. (*Read verses 20-23.*)

The LORD tells Ezekiel to set his face toward Sidon. Ezekiel is then told to prophesy against Sidon.

God intended to glorify Himself in the midst of Sidon in order to show Sidon the He is the LORD. In essence, the LORD says He will bring disease and armed attack against the city from all sides. And this He did.

Nebuchadnezzar came against Sidon and conquered it prior to his siege of Tyre. Nevertheless, Sidon reached its peak of power through its worldwide trade in the murex dye and glass industries after the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

However, the LORD was not through with Sidon, because in 351 BC Artaxerxes III of Persia sacked Sidon. Then, in 333 BC Sidon surrendered to Alexander the Great without a fight.

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Sidon (Saida) Today



02/02/2018

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11

Here is a picture of the modern city of Sidon. Today it is called Saida, which means “fishing”.

One site stated that “Sidon was the scene of heavy fighting during Lebanon’s civil war and it deteriorated during the subsequent Israeli occupation. There is little industry and the port services only a minimal number of local fishing vessels. There is little archaeological evidence of ancient Sidon.”

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Israel's Return

- The LORD speaks to Ezekiel of the restoration of the house of Israel
- God will gather the Jewish people from every nation where they had been scattered
- They will dwell in the land promised to Jacob at Bethel
- They will be secure, when God judges those who have mistreated them

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12

Let's read chapter 28 of Ezekiel verses 24 – 26. (*Read verses 24-26.*)

There are just three verses at the end of chapter 28, but they are extremely powerful.

This section does not begin with, "The word of the LORD came to me." So, it appears that verses 24 through 26 just follow immediately after the LORD's pronouncement upon the city of Sidon.

However, this section does not appear to be related to the fall of Sidon. Rather it seems to look forward to a time when there will no longer be places like Tyre or Sidon that will harm or attempt to harm Israel. According to the text, it appears that at that time every country and all people will know who the LORD is.

Phil 2:10-11 (ESV) says

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The LORD, as we have already seen in several verses throughout the Bible, states that He will gather the house of Israel from all the nations where they are scattered. And He declares that they will dwell once more in their own land.

Notice that the LORD says He gave the land to Jacob. The LORD made this promise in Gen 28:13-16, where He said, "The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring." Jacob then called the place Bethel, the house of God. And what did the LORD change Jacob's name to? Correct. Israel. So, despite all of the news and acrimonious views of the nations of the world, who does the land belong to? Correct. It belongs to Israel.

It has not happened yet. But, the LORD says that when He has executed His judgments upon Israel's neighbors, who have treated Israel with contempt, then the nation will dwell securely. And the people will know their LORD.

Questions?

Please read chapters 29 through 32 for next week.

Let's pray.