Ezekiel 26

Greedy Tyre:
Scraped to Bare Rock

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Tyre saw Jerusalem's ruin as a business opportunity. God answered with wave after wave of judgment until the proud city was scraped down to bare rock. Profit at someone else's expense is not success; God is against the greed that cheers another's fall.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 26 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And it came to pass ◷ in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her ⇄ like the top of a rock.

5 It shall be a place for the ◷ spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: ▲ for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

6 And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

7 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus ◷ Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

8 He shall ⚠ slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall ◷ lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

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

14 And I will make thee ⇄ like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; ⚠ thou shalt be built no more: ▲ for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee?

16 Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: ⚠ they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

17 And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, ⚠ How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it!

18 Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.

19 For thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee;

20 When I shall bring thee down with ⚠ them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living;

21 I will make thee a terror, and ⚠ thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, ⚠ yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord GOD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month
- **v2** ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people
- **v2** ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste
- **v3** ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus
- **v3** ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up
- **v4** like the top of a rock *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** spreading of nets
- **v5** ▲ for I have spoken it
- **v6** they shall know that I am the LORD
- **v7** Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings
- **v8** ⚠ slay with the sword
- **v12** lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water
- **v13** ▲ I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease
- **v14** ⚠ thou shalt be built no more
- **v14** ▲ for I the LORD have spoken it
- **v16** ⚠ they shall clothe themselves with trembling
- **v17** ⚠ How art thou destroyed
- **v19** ▲ When I shall make thee a desolate city
- **v20** ⚠ them that descend into the pit
- **v20** ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living
- **v21** ⚠ thou shalt be no more
- **v21** ⚠ yet shalt thou never be found again

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, ⚠ Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: ⚠ I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste:

Setting

"Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month" (v1) — the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's exile, about 587/586 BC. The month is not named. Jerusalem fell in the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year (Jer 39:2), and Tyre's gloating in v2 sounds like a reaction to that news. Tyre was the great Phoenician sea power on the coast north of Israel, with a city on the mainland and a fortress-city on an island just offshore. Chapters 26–28 are Ezekiel's longest set of oracles against a single foreign city.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **Tyre's "Aha":** "because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken'" (v2) — "I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste" (v2).
- vv3–6 — **wave after wave:** "Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves" (v3). "I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock" (v4). "She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken" (v5).
- vv7–11 — **Nebuchadnezzar's siege:** "I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings" (v7), with siege wall, ramp and large shield (v8), battering rams and axes (v9), dust, noise, hoofs and sword (vv10–11).
- vv12–14 — **"they" finish the work:** "Also they will make a spoil of your riches" (v12) and "throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water" (v12). "So I will silence the sound of your songs" (v13). "I will make you a bare rock … You will be built no more, for I the LORD have spoken" (v14).
- vv15–18 — **the coastlands tremble:** the princes of the sea step down from their thrones; "they will clothe themselves with trembling" (v16) and lament, "How you have perished" (v17).
- vv19–21 — **down to the pit:** "When I make you a desolate city" (v19), "I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit" (v20) — "but I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20). "I will bring terrors on you and you will be no more; though you will be sought, you will never be found again" (v21).

Repeated words

walls (vv4, 8, 9, 10, 12); towers (vv4, 9); sword (vv6, 8, 11); nations (vv3, 5); a bare rock (vv4, 14); spreading of nets (vv5, 14); spoil (vv5, 12); no more (vv13, 14, 21); coastlands (vv15, 18); tremble / trembling (vv16, 18); the pit (v20, twice); declares / thus says the Lord GOD (vv3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 21).

Contrasts

"I shall be filled" (v2) ⟷ "I will scrape her debris from her" (v4). Tyre counting on the sea (v17) ⟷ God bringing nations "as the sea brings up its waves" (v3) and the deep covering her (v19). The sound of songs and harps (v13) ⟷ princes sitting on the ground trembling (v16). Down to the pit (v20) ⟷ glory in the land of the living (v20). A renowned city (v17) ⟷ "you will never be found again" (v21).

Chapter theme (my words)

Tyre saw Jerusalem's ruin as a business opportunity. God answered with wave after wave of judgment until the proud city was scraped down to bare rock. Profit at someone else's expense is not success; God is against the greed that cheers another's fall.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:3 (KJV)

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, ▲ as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

Why Tyre gloated (vv1–2)

Guzik describes Tyre as a wealthy commercial power; Taylor, in Guzik, notes it was famous for its glassware and dyed materials. It had been Israel's friend — Hiram supplied David and Solomon (2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:1–12) — but later Tyre sold Israelites as slaves (Amos 1:9; Joel 3:4–6). Jerusalem was "the gateway of the peoples," controlling inland trade routes. With it gone, trade would flow through Tyre: "I shall be filled." Guzik says the gloating was driven by greed, and quotes Vawter and Hoppe: "Jerusalem's fall enhanced Tyre's control over commerce in the eastern Mediterranean." Morgan, in Guzik: "God is against any nation whose life has become so materialized by commercial prosperity." Compare Prov 17:5 — whoever rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

Many nations like waves (vv3–6)

Tyre lived by the sea; God would judge it with "waves" of nations. Guzik traces them: Nebuchadnezzar's siege of about 13 years (c. 586–573 BC), the Persians, Alexander the Great (332 BC), Antiochus III, Rome, and finally the Saracens in the fourteenth century AD. "Tyre" (*Tsor*) means "rock," so "a bare rock" (v4) is a word play: the rock-city scraped down to bare rock. Her "daughters" on the mainland (v6) are her dependent towns.

Nebuchadnezzar (vv7–11)

This is the first time Ezekiel names him — "king of kings" (v7), the emperor over subject kings (compare Dan 2:37). The siege equipment is exactly what a land army would use. Guzik notes that Nebuchadnezzar took the mainland city after 13 years but could not take the island fortress. Ezekiel

himself later says Nebuchadnezzar's army labored hard against Tyre without getting wages for it (29:17–20).

"They" — the later waves (vv12–14)

The pronoun shifts from "he" (vv7–11) to "they" (v12). Guzik reads this as the later invaders, above all Alexander. To reach the island, Alexander's army built a causeway from the ruins of the old mainland city, literally throwing its stones, timber and debris into the water (v12) — just as Ezekiel prophesied, Guzik says. Feinberg, in Guzik, reports that Edward Robinson saw marble columns lying under the water off Tyre's shore.

"You will be built no more" (v14)

Christians answer the obvious question — there is a city called Tyre today — in more than one way. Guzik notes that the Saracens destroyed the city so thoroughly that its remains are hard to find, and that modern Tyre is not on the same site; he also observes that God delayed the final judgment for centuries, and that Jesus ministered in the region of Tyre (Matt 15:21; Mark 7:24–31). Others read "built no more" as the end of Tyre as the proud sea power it was, or apply it to the scraped-bare mainland city. Either way, the Tyre that gloated over Jerusalem is gone.

The princes of the sea (vv15–18)

Tyre's trading partners step off their thrones and put on "trembling" like a garment (v16). Guzik notes that the funeral lament is used here in a satirical way. Clarke, in Guzik, notes how strong Tyre was: Alexander despaired of taking it without filling in the arm of the sea.

Down to the pit (vv19–21)

"The pit" (*bor*) is a cistern or dungeon, and by extension the realm of the dead. Block, in Guzik: it "refers primarily to a cistern in which rainwater is trapped and stored." The "lower parts of the earth" are not geography but the place of the dead. Against that darkness God says: "I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20) — His purposes stand among His people. Meyer, in Guzik, contrasts v21 — "though you will be sought, you will never be found again" — with Jer 50:20, where Israel's sins are searched for and not found, because God has pardoned them.

Word study (Hebrew)

- **Tyre — *Tsor* (H6865):** "rock," the Phoenician island city.
- **Aha — *he'ach* (H1889):** a jeer of triumph.
- **gateway — *deleth* (H1817):** a door, gate.
- **laid waste — *charab* (H2717):** to be dried up, desolate, ruined.
- **waves — *gal* (H1530):** a heap; a wave or billow.
- **scrape — *sachah* (H5500):** to sweep or scrape away.
- **bare rock — *tsechiach* (H6706):** a glaring, sun-baked, bare surface.
- **nets — *cherem* (H2764):** a fishing net (same spelling as "devoted thing").
- **king of kings — *melek* (H4428):** king — doubled for supreme rank.
- **spoil — *shalal* (H7998):** plunder, booty.
- **built — *banah* (H1129):** to build, rebuild.

- **trembling — *charadah* (H2731):** fear, anxiety, trembling.
- **lamentation — *qinah* (H7015):** a dirge, funeral song.
- **pit — *bor* (H953):** a cistern, dungeon, grave.
- **terrors — *ballahah* (H1091):** sudden terror, destruction.

Cross-references

2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:1–12; Ps 28:3–5; Prov 17:5; Isa 23:1–18; Jer 47:4; Jer 50:20; Ezek 27:1–36; Ezek 28:1–19; Ezek 29:17–20; Joel 3:4–8; Amos 1:9–10; Zech 9:2–4; Matt 11:21–22; Matt 15:21–28; Luke 12:15; Rev 18:9–19.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 26:20 (KJV)

20 When I shall bring thee down with ⚠ them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and ★ I shall set glory in the land of the living;

Command to obey — "Behold, I am against you" (v3)

That is a sentence I never want God to say over me. I'll take it as a command to check what I'm building on. If my security is in my business, my income or my connections, I'll put it back where it belongs. Jesus said, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed" (Luke 12:15).

Sin to confess — profiting from someone's ruin

Tyre looked at Jerusalem's collapse and thought, "I shall be filled" (v2). I'll confess every time I've seen someone else's loss as my opening — a competitor's failure, a rival's fall, a brother's stumble. Greed wears business clothes, but God calls it by name.

Warning to heed — the walls will not hold

Tyre had towers, an island fortress, and the whole sea around it. God brought wave after wave until it was bare rock (vv3–4). Many of the men I disciple once built their lives on hustle, dealing or a reputation on the street; some of them watched it all go down in one raid or one sentence. What a man builds without God will not stand. Better to let it go now than to watch it thrown into the sea.

Promise to trust — "I will set glory in the land of the living" (v20)

Tyre went down to the pit, but God's glory remains among the living. For the man who feels like he's already in the pit — locked up, sober and scared, or out with nothing — God has not stopped working. And unlike Tyre, whose ruin "will never be found again," the sins of God's forgiven people are sought and not found (Jer 50:20).

Example to follow — the God who keeps His word

"For I the LORD have spoken" (v14). God's word against Tyre was fulfilled over centuries, wave by wave. I want to be a man who believes God's promises the same way — even when the fulfillment takes longer than I want.

Worship

The LORD stirs up nations like the sea stirs up waves. Kings are His instruments, proud cities fall at His word, and not one thing He has spoken fails. He sets glory in the land of the living.

Prayer

Lord GOD, guard my heart from greed and from cheering at anyone's fall. Tear down whatever I've built apart from You before it takes me down with it. Lift the men I serve out of the pit and set Your glory in their lives. You have spoken, and Your word will stand. Amen.