

Ezekiel 26:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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;

Analysis

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. This prophetic judgment against Tyre employs dramatic imagery of cosmic devastation. The Hebrew word for "desolate" (shammah, שָׁמָמָה) conveys utter ruin and horror—a city so destroyed it evokes shock and dismay. The phrase "cities that are not inhabited" refers to ancient ruins that have ceased to function as living communities, becoming mere archaeological remnants.

The imagery of "the deep" (tehom, תְהוֹם) rising to cover the city reverses creation itself. In Genesis 1, God separated the waters to create habitable land; here, He causes the primordial waters to return, symbolizing de-creation and judgment. This echoes the flood narrative, where God's judgment came through overwhelming waters. The "great waters" (mayim rabbim, מְאַיִם רַבִּים) throughout Scripture often represent chaos, danger, and divine judgment.

Historically, this prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre (585-573 BC) and later when Alexander the Great destroyed the island city (332 BC) using debris from the mainland ruins to build a causeway—literally covering it with earth and water. This demonstrates God's absolute sovereignty over even the most powerful commercial empires. Tyre's pride in her maritime wealth and

strategic position could not save her from divine judgment. The verse warns against false security in earthly power, commerce, and geographic advantage.

Historical Context

Tyre was one of the ancient world's greatest maritime powers and commercial centers, located on the Phoenician coast (modern Lebanon). The city consisted of two parts: a mainland settlement and a fortified island city about half a mile offshore, making it virtually impregnable to ancient siege warfare. Tyre's wealth came from its purple dye industry, skilled craftsmen, and extensive trade networks spanning the Mediterranean world.

Ezekiel prophesied against Tyre around 587-586 BC, shortly after Jerusalem's fall to Babylon. Tyre had apparently rejoiced at Jerusalem's destruction, hoping to profit from Israel's downfall by capturing trade routes. God's judgment came in stages: Nebuchadnezzar besieged the mainland city for thirteen years (585-573 BC), though the island city survived. The ultimate fulfillment came when Alexander the Great destroyed island Tyre in 332 BC by building a causeway from mainland rubble—a feat so remarkable that the ruins remain partly underwater today, fulfilling the prophecy that she would become "a place to spread nets" (Ezekiel 26:14). This demonstrates how biblical prophecy can have both near and far fulfillments, and how God's judgments, though sometimes delayed, are certain.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's judgment against Tyre's pride and self-sufficiency speak to our modern culture's confidence in economic power and technological achievement?
2. What does the imagery of de-creation (waters covering the land) teach us about the seriousness of divine judgment and the fragility of human civilization?
3. In what ways might we be trusting in 'uninhabitable securities'—things that appear stable but cannot withstand God's judgment?
4. How does the complete fulfillment of this prophecy strengthen our confidence in biblical prophecies yet to be fulfilled, including Christ's return?
5. What practical steps can we take to ensure we're building our lives on eternal foundations rather than the shifting sands of temporal wealth and power?

Interlinear Text

אָתָּה בְּתַתִּי יְהוָה אֲדֹנִי אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי כִּי H3588 H3541 For thus saith the Lord GOD When I shall make H550 H136 H3060 H5414 H853

נֹשֶׁ בּוֹ	לֹא	אֲשֶׁר	כַּעַר	בַּת	כַּעַר	יִם	נֹחַר	בַּת	כַּעַר	יִם
city	thee a desolate	city		H834	H3808	that are not inhabited				
H5892	H2717	H5892								H3427

בְּנָעַל וְת	עַל יְה	אַת	תְּהִוֵּם	וְתָהִרְתָּ	וְתָכַסְתָּ וְתָמַם
when I shall bring up	H5921	H853	the deep	shall cover	waters

הרבאים:

upon thee and great

H7227

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 26:3 (References God): 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.

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