

THE RISE AND FALL OF
TYRE
“The Queen of the Seas”



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Tyre's Destruction and Restoration Foretold

In ancient times Tyre was an international place of commerce. It existed in the days of Joshua (Josh.19:29) and was called "the strong city of Tyre". In David's day it was called "the strong hold of Tyre" (2Sam.24:7). Hiram King of Tyre, who was a great admirer of David (1Kings 5:1), built David's house at Jerusalem (2Sam.5:11). Hiram's mother was a Jewess and his father a man of Tyre (1Kings7:13) who was highly skilled in working with brass. The friendship with Hiram continued in the days of Solomon, and Hiram supplied materials and skills for construction of the Temple at Jerusalem (1Kings 9:11).

Tyre was a centre of industry especially metalurgy hence its connection with the ships of Tarshish that brought all manner of metals from Cornwall, England (1Kings 7:14). Gold was supplied by Hiram (1Kings 9:11). Europe's last tin mine at Cornwall closed in 1998 but plans were made to reopen it in 2009. In the 19th century there were thousands of mines with up to 18,000 miners employed. When the price dropped in 1875 Cornish miners migrated all over the world.

Stone masons and carpenters came from Tyre to build David's house in Jerusalem (1Chron.14:1). Timber was obtained from Lebanon where the famous cedars of Lebanon grew.

Tyre was on the coast and with her twin city Sidon, just 20 miles away, engaged in boat building. They were leading Phoenician cities and their ships plied the Mediterranean bringing trade to the markets of Tyre.

Tyre supplied pilots skilled in **navigation** for ships, and its

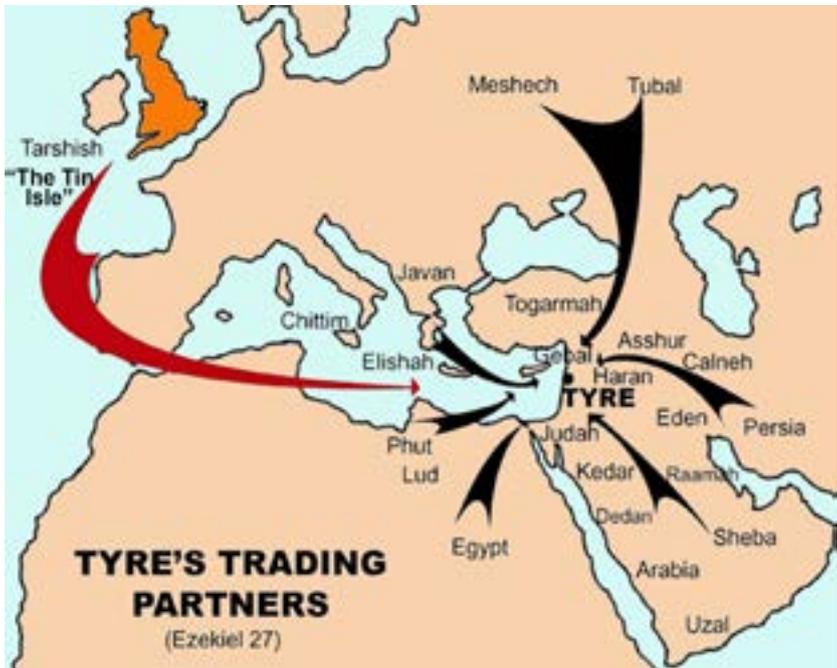


tradesmen built ships from fir trees, oaks (oars) and cedars (masts). They had caulkers to watertight the ships, probably with bitumin (Ezek.27:5, 8-9).

Tyre possessed great resources of timber in the mountains of Lebanon and provided thousands of hewers to cut down trees and float them down the coast to Solomon's men who then took them to Jerusalem for the Temple.

Tyre possessed a clothing industry and sent tradesmen to Jerusalem to make the *"purple, and crimson, and blue"* curtains in the Temple (2Chron.2:7).

There was evidence of intermarriage between the men of Tyre and the women of Israel for not only did Hiram have a Jewish mother from the tribe of Naphtali but the man who Hiram sent to supervise all the trades required to build the Temple was the son of a Jewish mother from the Tribe of Dan (2Chron.2:13-14). In David and Solomon's day relations were cordial between Israel and Tyre and this would hardly have been the case if Tyre was an evil influence at the time. It is clear that this situation changed in later years.



Anything could be bought at Tyre for she was “*a mart (marketplace) of nations*” (Isa.23:3). In Ezekiel ch.27 a long list of commodities is given from countries as far afield as Tarshish (Britain was known as the “Tin Isle”). Ezekiel states that **tin** was brought from Tarshish (Ezek.27:12) and we know that the only source of tin in Europe for the past 2,500 years was Cornwall in the south of England. Archeologists have identified the seaport in Cornwall where ships loaded tin and other minerals for the Middle East. Turkish pottery has been found near the harbour in Cornwall.



Wales just north of Cornwall is rich in minerals and Ezekiel says the ships of Tarshish brought “*silver, iron, tin, and lead*” to trade in the marketplace of Tyre (Ezek.27:12).

The ships of Tarshish were the largest ocean-going ships in the ancient world especially designed to carry heavy cargos of minerals.

Isaiah described Tyre as “*the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth?*” (Isa.23:8).

Tyre's Judgment

It was possibly in the days of Hezekiah that Tyre joined with surrounding nations “*to cut them (Israel) off from being a nation*” (Ps.83:4) and this brought Tyre under judgment. Isaiah foretold this judgment:

*“The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that **there is no house, no entering in:** from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. **Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle;** thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.*”

About 800BC Amos had prophesied judgment on Tyre:

*“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: But **I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus,** which shall devour the palaces thereof” (Amos 1:0-10).*

Tyre was a hive of activity and a centre of international trade but Isaiah said she would be “still” and there would be “no entering in”. In other words the trade would cease and it did for 70 years during the the Babylonian era after a 13-year siege by Nebuchanezzar.

In the ancient world Egypt supplied wheat to nations around the Mediterranean. It was sold in the market-place of Tyre.

“And by great waters the seed of Sihor, (Egypt) the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins. As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre” (Isa.23:3-5).

The traders of Tyre are advised to shift operations offshore to Tarshish (England) which was the source of minerals, and to Chittim, which was a name for the many Greek and Phoenician colonies around the Mediterranean.

“Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle”... Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof. And he said, Thou shalt no



more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest” (Isa.23:6-12).

The Greeks and Phoenicians had established trading colonies around the shores of the Mediterranean and around the coast of the Black Sea. Josephus identifies Chittim with Cyprus but it may be a name extending to all the **Phoenician colonies: Cyprus, Sicily, Sardinia, southern Spain and North Africa.** The destruction of Tyre would therefore have repercussions throughout the nations of the known world. These had become strong through trading with Tyre but Isaiah wrote that there *“would be no more strength”*. Tyre was the trading hub in the eastern Mediterranean as indicated in Ezekiel ch.27 so no wonder Isaiah cried, *“Howl ye ships of Tarshish!”*

Tyre’s Restoration after the Babylonian Seige

However, the destruction of Tyre prophesied by Isaiah lasted for only **seventy years** during the days of the Babylonian Empire.

*“Tyre shall be forgotten **seventy years**...at the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as a harlot” (Isa.23:15).*

History records that Nebuchadnezzar besieged the coastal city of Tyre for 13 years. According to Josephus (*Antiquities Book 1*, para.156 & 159), Nebuchadnezzar began the siege in the 7th year of his reign and the siege finished in 586BC, which was the same year that the Temple was burned in Jerusalem. Tyre began operations again 70 years later (516BC) in the Persian era just in time to supply the materials for the service in Zerubbabel’s Temple as foretold by Isaiah:

*“Her merchandise shall be **for them that dwell before the LORD**, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing” (Isa.23:15-18).*

This was remarkably fulfilled as recorded in (Ezra 6:6-10). Cyrus the Persian king commanded the governors adjacent to Jerusalem **to supply the priests** with all they needed for Temple service:

“Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king’s goods, even of the

tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons."

At the conclusion of the 70 years of isolation Tyre would resume her **global trade** and the nations would again send their merchandise as Isaiah made clear:

*"And it shall come to pass **after the end of seventy years**, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with **all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth**" (Isa.23:17).*

This Scripture is a reminder that the human race was relevantly small in 700BC. After the Flood which occurred about 2500BC the descendants of Noah settled along the Euphrates and south along the Nile River. At first there were **cities, each with their king**. At the time of Abraham about 2000BC four kings came from the east and fought against five kings of **the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar**.

Chinese history can be traced back to about 1000BC and South East Asia to about 500BC as men began to spread over the face of the earth. Rome began her Monarchical era with seven kings beginning in 753BC and Greece was ruled by **city states** until the fourth century BC when Alexander and his Generals united the nation.

In Isaiah's day (750BC) Assyria and Egypt were emerging as contenders to rule the Middle East. England (Tarshish) was occupied by tribes in one of the distant isles "*beyond the sea*" (Mediterranean) (Jer.25:22). Tarshish had become important because of its mineral wealth. So when Tyre traded with all the kingdoms of the world it was limited to those accessible by sea and those that were accessible by land along trade routes from Arabia in the south, Togarmah (Turkey), Tubal and Meshech (Russia) in the north, and as far east as Persia (Ezek.27:10-25). These represented all the kingdoms of the world at that time and the importance of Tyre cannot be overstated.

Ezekiel's Prophecy of Tyre

Ezekiel prophesied in the 11th year of his captivity (586BC) that **Nebuchadnezzar** would destroy Tyre (Ezek.26:7-14). It had been holding out against Nebuchadnezzar's army for 12 years at that stage and may have seemed secure but that same year **the coastal city** fell.

Ezekiel gave a great deal of information about life in Tyre. He described it as a place of revelry and music. It had "*strong garrisons*" of mercenary soldiers to defend it and it was a place of great idolatry. The King of Tyre was a man possessed by Satan who claimed to be God.

*"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, **I am a God, I sit in the seat of God**, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art **wiser than Daniel**; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God**; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations" (Ezek.28:1-7).*

Josephus tells us that during the long siege the people of Tyre relocated to an island about one kilometer offshore so that when the coastal city was finally conquered there were no spoils. Ezekiel states:

*"Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus...**yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus**, for the service that he had served against it...Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall...take her spoil...and it shall be the wages for his army" (Ezek.29:18-19).*

Because Nebuchadnezzar received no riches for his service in judging Tyre, God gave him the riches of the land of Egypt as wages for his army (Ezek.29:18).

Jeremiah served at the time of the Babylonian invasions and he prophesied that the Jews would serve the King of Babylon 70 years

(606 - 536BC) (Jer.29:10; 25:11) and that the land would be desolate for 70 years (586 - 516BC).

Under the Babylonians, Tyre ceased to function, but the Persians revived it and the Phoenicians provided ships for the Persian navy which controlled the Mediterranean.

When Alexander the Great lead his Greek army against Darius the King of Persia, he had no navy but by capturing all the seaports in the eastern Mediterranean Alexander denied supplies to the Persian navy.

When Alexander besieged Tyre in 332BC, he built a causeway (a mole) from the mainland to the island-city of Tyre using the debris from the coastal city which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed.

The Phoenician fleet which made up most of the Persian navy, surrendered to Alexander during the siege of Tyre. But not before the women and children had been shifted to the Phoenician colony of Carthage in North Africa.

When the Phonician fleet surrendered the 40,000 defenders had no way of escape. Alexander slew 8,000, crucified hundreds along the beaches and sold the remainder into slavery.

Ezekiel not only prophesied the overthrow of the **coastal city** by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek.26:1-11) but also the destruction of the **island fortress** by Alexander (Ezek.26:12-21). The pronoun changes from "he" (Nebuchadnezzar) to "they" in verse 12.



The reason for this destruction is stated: Tyre considered Jerusalem a competitor in trade and when the Assyrian armies of Sennacherib had captured every city of Judah (727BC), Jerusalem had lost her status and Tyre rejoiced saying:

“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” (Ezek.26:2).

Jerusalem had been the “gates of the people” and trade routes led to her. In David and Solomon’s day all kings traded with Jerusalem. The Queen of Sheba came from Arabia. Egypt gave Pharaoh’s daughter to Solomon. The Moabites, Syrians and Aramaeans were David’s servants and the men of Tyre were Solomon’s servants to build the Temple. **Israel extended from the Euphrates to the Nile (2Chron.9:26)** and when Tyre saw her competitor eliminated she rejoiced so God said:

“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. 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. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea” (Ezek.26:3-5).

This destruction began with the siege of Tyre in the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar but after 70 years Tyre was restored to supply merchandise, food, and clothing for the priesthood at Jerusalem during the Persian era.

The Persian kings commanded the governors adjacent to Jerusalem to support Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:6-10) in the building and operation of the Temple. The remainder of the prophecy was fulfilled in 332BC when the island city of Tyre was captured by Alexander the Great.

Alexander scrapped the debris from the old city of Tyre which was left by Nebuchadnezzar in order to build a causeway to the island fortress and today fishermen spread their nets on the site of the old city just as Ezekiel had foretold.

Tyre in Pagan Mythology

Greek mythology tells the story of abduction of Europa the daughter of the king of Tyre by Zeus who was the father of the Greek gods. According to the legend, Zeus wished to marry Europa but she

refused so he turned himself into a bull and the story goes as follows:

“So the father and ruler of the gods, who is armed with the three-forked lightning in his right hand, whose nod shakes the world, setting aside his royal sceptre, took on the shape of a bull. [He] lowed among the other cattle, and, beautiful to look at, wandered in the tender grass... King Agenor’s daughter marvelled at how beautiful he was and how unthreatening... The royal virgin even dares to sit on the bull’s back, not realising whom she presses on, while the god, first from dry land and then from the shoreline, gradually slips his deceitful hooves into the waves. Then he goes further out and carries his prize over the mid-surface of the sea.”



Zeus finally reaches Crete where he turned himself back to his original self and married Europa who became queen of Crete and was given all of Europe which was named after her.

In this legend Zeus, the father of the gods is the king of Europe by virtue of his relationship with the daughter of the king of Tyre.

One can't help wondering if there is not some connection between Tyre and *“mystery Babylon the Great”* (Rev.17:1-18) represented by the harlot woman riding a beast. The beast is undoubtedly the revived Roman Empire led by Antichrist and the woman can be none other than the Papacy.

When Ezekiel wrote his prophecy of Tyre (Ezek.chs.26 to 28) he concluded with a message for the King of Tyre and indicated that the King of Tyre had claimed to be God:

*“Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and **thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God”** (Ezek.28:2).*

But the message is even more sinister for God goes on to address the King of Tyre as *“the anointed cherub that covereth”* who was

“upon the holy mountain” and who had been *“in Eden the garden of God”* (Ezek.28:13-14). With this in mind we can draw no other conclusion than that Satan himself was the spirit power possessing the King of Tyre.

When the Devil tempted the Lord on the mount of temptation we read that he

“shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine” (Luke45-7).

Paul described Satan as *“the God of this world”* (2Cor.4:4) and his demons as *“the rulers of the darkness of this world”*. So it seems that Satan had his throne in Tyre where the King of Tyre was his willing subject.

The pagan legend of Zeus and Europa may have more to it than appears on the surface.

Tyre in the Days of Ahab

Ahab was the evil King of the northern kingdom of Israel when Jehoshaphat reigned in Judah. He married Jezebel the daughter of **Ethbaal, King of Tyre and Sidon.**

Ethbaal was a priest of the god Astarte which was the Phoenician god of fertility and sexuality.

When Jezebel became queen of Israel she brought with her 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the *“groves”* (Astarte, or Ashtaroth, 1Sam.7:4) and ordered that the prophets of the Lord be slain.

Ahab’s daughter was Athaliah who married Jehoram king of Judah. On Jehoram’s death Athaliah seized the throne and attempted to slay all males in the royal family of David. Only Joash survived.

Thus idolatrous Tyre almost succeeded in wiping out the line of David and thus frustrating the promises that will be finally fulfilled in Christ the son of David.

In Revelation chapter 2, John wrote of a prophetess Jezebel in the church at Thyatira who seduced God's servants "to commit fornication, and to eat thing sacrificed to idols" (Rev.2:20).

The church at Thyatira is a prophetic picture of the Roman Catholic Church era beginning 600AD and continuing to the coming of the Lord.

Then in Revelation chapter 17 *Mystery Babylon the Great* the mother of harlots, the Papacy, is seen riding the Beast (Antichrist and his kingdom) just as Europa rode the white bull, Zeus, from Tyre to Crete.

Add to this the fact that Satan possessed the King of Tyre in Ezekiel's day and we see that Antichrist will be a Satanically-inspired and possessed man. Scripture describes Antichrist as

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (Rev.17:8).

During the Tribulation the bottomless pit is opened and the demons released. They have a king as John indicates:

"They had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (Rev.9:11).

The connection between Europa and the Roman Catholic Church which is the greatest idolatrous system on the face of the earth is immediately apparent. In pagan mythology Europe was given to Europa and bears her name.

Today the EU has adopted the symbol of a woman riding a white bull. It appears on coins, sculptures, and artwork along with pictures of the unfinished Tower of Babel that was used to fashion one of the EU parliament buildings.



Tyre's Future

In the Millennial kingdom

*“the **daughter of Tyre** shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favor” (Ps.45:12).*

Tyre supplied materials and labour for the first Temple and supplies for the priests of the second Temple. Perhaps she will supply materials for the millennial Temple? This however would require many people of Tyre (**Lebanon**) to turn to the Lord during the



Tribulation in order to enter the kingdom. Therefore, by deduction, we can assume that there will be many in Lebanon and the coasts of Tyre who will refuse to receive the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation and will welcome Christ at His return. These will be among the “sheep” to whom the Lord will say:

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt.25:34).

