

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 142

Ezekiel 26-27

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### Episode Summary

Five of the seven nations that are the target of judgment oracles were found in Ezekiel 25. Tyre takes its position in the prophetic crosshairs next. Over the course of three chapters (26-28), God has Ezekiel pronounce Tyre's dire future in the wake of her hubris and delight at Jerusalem's destruction. This episode covers Ezekiel 26-27 with an oracle of judgment (Ezek 26) and a lament (Ezek 27).

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 142: Ezekiel chapters 26 and 27. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing this week?

**MH:** Pretty good, Trey. We've had a real nice development, as far as Miqlat. People who subscribe to the newsletter would have gotten this news already, but you may know that one of the things we're doing (and the podcast helps that because people who listen to the podcast will donate to my nonprofit, Miqlat), our big project for this year was to get *Supernatural* (the short version of my book, *The Unseen Realm*—this is a much smaller book) translated into as many languages as we can this year. We're paying for people to do this. We've had our first translation actually completed, and we're barely into 2017. So the Chinese translation of *Supernatural* now exists! We're having it proofread, and eventually it'll go online for free. We're trying to strategize with some people in the Chinese Church community (I guess I'll just leave it at that) so that they can give us advice on what's the best way to get this to as many Chinese readers as possible—on their phones, computers, hard copies, whatever it is. How do we get this to as many people who read Chinese as possible? So that's the next step, but we actually have one down and six or seven others running, so that's pretty neat!

**TS:** That's exciting. That's awesome. Good!

**MH:** Yep. So we're trucking along. This is listener supported. Basically, the content I produce (whether it's on the website or here) is really made possible by the people that donate. This is the kind of thing we want to do. We want to

produce content that people can use for free, and in this case that means people who don't read English. We want it to be in lots of other languages, especially those that are in persecuted church situations, under all sorts of obstacles to getting Christian content. We're just hoping that what we produce here is going to get pirated (laughs) and distributed as widely as possible. So thanks for that!

**TS:** That's awesome, that's great! And we appreciate everybody that's contributed, because that's made possible by you, the listeners. So thank you!

**MH:** Absolutely!

We'll jump in here. We actually have three chapters (26, 27, and 28) that are directed to the same nation. These are the oracles against the nations, and we overviewed what the oracles against the nations are in the previous episode. But these three chapters are all directed against Tyre, and really chapter 28 is sort of the "money chapter." We're going to devote a whole episode to chapter 28 because I want to take readers into why so many commentators want to deny that Ezekiel 28 has anything to do with Genesis 3 and the rebellion of the *nachash* (the serpent). They'll say it doesn't have anything to do with Isaiah 14 and the rebellion of *helel ben shahar*. In Latin, that was *lucifer*, so that's how that gets translated "Lucifer, son of the dawn" or "the shining one." A lot of scholars want to divorce Ezekiel 28 of that stuff, even though (as I've argued in *Unseen Realm*) there are lots of good parallels. We're going to devote a whole episode to that chapter next time.

For this chapter, though, we've got to start with the previous two chapters—26 and 27. So, in some respect, this is sort of lead-up to chapter 28, the so-called "money chapter." But I don't want to lump all three of them because there's just a lot to talk about when we get to chapter 28.

5:00 So as far as 26 and 27 (the prophecy against Tyre), chapter 26 is really sort of the primary oracle (prophetic utterance) against Tyre announcing the fact that Tyre is going to be judged by God. Chapter 27 is actually a lament over the fall of Tyre. That doesn't mean that God punishes them in 26 and then God is sorry in 27. The lament is really focused on the surrounding peoples that are affected by what happens to Tyre, and of course, Tyre itself. This was a place geographically just to the north of where ancient Israel would have been, and even modern Israel. It's the northern parts, the northern regions. In the ancient world, this would have been Phoenician territory.

I want to say a little bit about Tyre because part of the impact of the fact that Tyre is going to be judged in chapter 26... It's hard to understand why that was a big deal for us. We don't have that context. For the ancient person, to suggest that Tyre could fall would have been like, "Oh, come on. You've got to be kidding. That's just never going to happen." And there are reasons for that, which we want to talk about in this episode because I think that will help capture the

magnitude—what that would have meant for people in the ancient world to see a city like this be conquered.

We'll start with Block to set up the context, and then we'll go into another source here. He writes this:

All the oracles in ch. 25 had been hypothetically addressed toward the nation-states on Judah's eastern, southern, and southwestern doorsteps [MH: remember in the last episode we said they sort of proceed in this clockwise fashion around Judah]. Along with Israel and Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Philistia represented nation-states, entities whose ethnic boundaries tended to be coterminous with their geopolitical borders. That is, the name of the state derived from the name of the people (*'am*) inhabiting the territory. But Tyre (and later Sidon) was different. This was a territorial state according to which a single ethnic group was divided into a series of political units, each with its own capital city (from which the state usually received its name) and reigning monarch. The boundaries of territorial states fluctuated, depending on the strength and reach of a king. Like the Arameans, the Phoenicians were divided into a series of territorial states. The ethnic composition of the Phoenician states provides a further contrast with their neighbors to the south. Whereas the latter were all relative newcomers to the [Jordan proper] and Transjordanian scene, having dispossessed the native inhabitants in the last half of the 2nd millennium B.C., the Phoenicians represented the remnants of the original population that occupied Canaan when the Israelites arrived.

The name Tyre (Heb. *ṣûr*, *ṣūr*) derives from the rock (*ṣôr*) on which the city was built. In ancient times the rock formed an island about 600 yards off the coast of Phoenicia, approximately 25 miles south of Sidon and 28 miles north of Akko. Ezekiel's recognition of this insular state is reflected in his location of Tyre *bĕlĕb/bĕtôk yammîm*, "in the heart/midst of the sea" (26:5; 27:4, 32).

So Tyre is actually not on the mainland. The city was off the coast. Block says it was about 600 yards off the coast on this huge rock. Now, Tyre is probably most known (if it's known at all) because of this situation. The military advantage to having your major city not on the mainland but just sort of right out there in the middle of the water should be obvious. It would have been very, very difficult to assault the city because of what it was. The Phoenicians were seafaring people. They had a very, very good navy and they could protect the city. You couldn't have an invading army just walk up to the door and roll up siege ramps because you've got a 600-yard distance between where you're standing and where you want to be.

So Tyre had this reputation for being kind of impregnable. That changes with Alexander the Great. If you've heard of Tyre, it might be because of this story—

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this whole episode. Tyre is probably most familiar because of what Alexander does to take the city. In 332 B.C., Alexander finally (after lots of people had tried) conquered Tyre by building (get this!) a walkway of stone connecting the island to the mainland by means of an underwater causeway. There was a ridge of land that reached out to the island, but that was submerged by a good number of feet of water. It wasn't a huge depth, but you couldn't take horses through it; you couldn't do that. But what Alexander decides to do is to dump a lot of stone in and around that little part of land under the water. And he *built*, essentially, a road. He built a causeway the distance from the mainland to Tyre to take the city. It's still wasn't easy. I'm going to read a little section here from Wikipedia. It has a nice description of what went into this. I'll read some excerpts.

As Alexander could not attack the city from the sea, he built a kilometer-long causeway stretching out to the island on a natural land bridge no more than two meters deep.

This causeway allowed his artillery to get in range of the walls, and is still there to this day, as it was made of stone. As the work came near the walls, however, the water became much deeper, and the combined attacks from the walls and Tyrian navy made construction nearly impossible. Therefore, Alexander constructed two towers 50 m (160 ft) high and moved them to the end of the causeway [MH: **These were mobile towers. If you've ever seen siege warfare, you get the idea**]. Like most of Alexander's siege towers, these were moving artillery platforms, with catapults on the top to clear defenders off the walls, and ballista below to hurl rocks at the wall and attacking ships. The towers were made of wood, but were covered in rawhide to protect them from fire arrows. Although these towers were possibly the largest of their kind ever made, the Tyrians quickly devised a counterattack. They used an old horse transport ship, filling it with dried branches, pitch, sulfur, and various other combustibles. They then hung cauldrons of oil from the masts, so that they would fall onto the deck once the masts burned through. They also weighed down the back of the ship so that the front rose above the water [MH: **so the Greeks couldn't easily destroy the stuff that was planned as offensive weaponry against them**]. They then lit it on fire and ran it up onto the causeway. The fire spread quickly, engulfing both towers and other siege equipment that had been brought up. The Tyrian ships swarmed the pier, destroying any siege equipment that hadn't caught fire, and driving off Macedonian crews that were trying to put out the fires. [MH: **So this doesn't quite work; doesn't finish the job.**]

After this Alexander was convinced that he would not be able to take Tyre without a navy. Fortunately for him, his previous victory at Issus and subsequent conquests of the Phoenician city states of Byblos, Arwad and Sidon had caused the fleets of these cities, which composed most of the Persian navy, to come flocking to his banner. This immediately gave him command of a fleet of 80 ships.

This coincided also with the arrival of another 120 war galleys sent by the king of Cyprus, who had heard of his victories and wished to join him. With the arrival of another 23 ships from the Greek city states of Ionia, Alexander had 223 galleys under his command, giving him command of the sea. . . .

Eventually this is going to work. They're going to succeed in getting the rest of the causeway to the city so the troops can go there. They're going to use the navy for that. Alexander's new navy is going to defeat the Tyrians and eventually they're going to take Tyre. Wikipedia adds this:

15:00

. . . . Those citizens that took shelter in the temple of Melqart [MH: inside the city] were pardoned by Alexander, including the king of Tyre. According to Quintus Curtius Rufus 6,000 fighting men were killed within the city and 2,000 Tyrians were crucified on the beach. The others, some 30,000 people, were sold into slavery. The severity of reprisals was both because of the length of the siege, and because the Tyrians had executed some captured soldiers on the walls, in sight of the attackers.

In short, Alexander got ticked off by that and, not wishing to offend the deity of the city if you took refuge in the temple, he spared you. But if you didn't, you're either going to be dead or sold into slavery. This is a very famous account because it's just so unusual, it took so long, and it's Alexander. This is what Tyre is known for in ancient history. This post-dates what we're going to be reading about in terms of what goes on in Ezekiel, but typically that's what people know about the place. It was considered impregnable, and not only that, but as we get into the content of the message here, Tyre was an extremely wealthy city. There's a reason why the king of Cyprus would want to help Alexander. Sure, he wants to be Alexander's buddy, but this is a way to eliminate the place that economically controlled the region and basically substitute yourself—move yourself in there to take care of your competition.

So Tyre was extraordinarily wealthy—the center of trade for the area—and it was considered impregnable. It has this reputation by the time of Ezekiel 26 (and it's going to have it for centuries), and Ezekiel more or less says, "Well, that's nice, but you're going to lose your independence anyway." And what Ezekiel actually prophesies as far as Tyre's judgment is, "You're going to be in trouble, just like all the other oracles against the nations here. Your reputation isn't going to save you. You're still going to be dealt with." And the historical outcome of what Ezekiel says in this chapter isn't the loss of the city because it was never conquered physically like this until Alexander's time, even though it did lose its independence. It does get taken over, put under tribute and controlled by a foreign power and winds up being economically a "has-been" until it can build itself back up a little bit. And then, of course, Alexander takes care of business later on.

So as far as the actual chapter... Let's just jump in here. We're not going to read all two chapters, but we're going to skip around here. The first six verses are going to sound familiar if you listened to last week's episode.

**In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, ‘Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste,’ <sup>3</sup>therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. <sup>4</sup>They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers, and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock.**

Eventually, that's what's going to happen. It's going to take a while to get there, but in near-time to what Ezekiel is saying, Tyre is going to lose its independence. Eventually, Alexander is going to "wipe it off the rock," so to speak. So we're going to get there, but this sort of introduces what's going to follow as a long history of troubles for Tyre, and it's going to be cast as, "This is the judgment of God on you." And why? What's her crime? If you remember from the last episode, it's this gloating over the fact that Jerusalem was destroyed. The thrill... this exclamation that Yahweh's people are no more. Yahweh has been stripped of his inheritance (or has surrendered his inheritance). Now this place is like all the other nations. The Most High has given up again—which means, of course, that the Most High's plan is lost. "Because you gloated over this set of circumstances, I am against you." In other words (as I said a number of times in the last episode), the story does not end here. Tyre is going to find that out, just like the other nations in chapter 25 found out, as well. So the gloating is specifically mentioned again, and again it's this theme of hubris—this theme of "Yahweh is the loser. His plan didn't work. He has to disinherit them like he disinherited us. This is good news because now he is without an inheritance" (back to the Deuteronomy 32:8-9 Worldview). So this is what incenses God or becomes the reason for what's going to happen, as we see in the text.

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When we get past that point, we typically get (like we saw last time) descriptions of the kinds of things that are going to happen. Verse 7:

**<sup>7</sup>“For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers. <sup>8</sup>He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland. He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you, and raise a roof of shields against you. <sup>9</sup>He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers.**

You get this long description of battle that ultimately is just going to end badly for Tyre. Now, the description here, Taylor notes (I just want to read a little section before I make a few comments):

The description of the siege comes oddly in connection with an island stronghold like Tyre, where horses could certainly not be deployed. Perhaps Ezekiel was using conventional forms without regard to reality, but it is better to understand this as the description of a land-based siege, as was adopted by the Assyrians when they besieged Tyre in 673 and 668 BC. When Alexander the Great took Tyre it was after similar siege operations, following on the building of an enormous mole [causeway] from the mainland to the island defenses.

That's what we just read about. Taylor says that apparently what Ezekiel knows of battle, he's drawing on what he knows of siege warfare and that's why you get the description. The Assyrians did use this, but in their case they didn't destroy the city. Typically, what happens with Tyre and happened with the Assyrians (and it's also going to happen with the Babylonians) is that they take enough of a beating where they solicit their enemy and say, "Look, it's going to take you forever to take this place because you've got 600 yards of water between you and us, but we don't want to sit here and be under siege. We don't want to do this. So we will pay you money and be under your tribute. Let's just call it good." That's typically what would happen with Tyre. They would submit to a tribute, which is sort of a treaty, but essentially it's paying off their aggressors (enemies) to end the siege.

Historically speaking, that's what's going to happen here with Nebuchadnezzar. Now, the effect of this, though, could be not so bad or it could be terrible; it could be awful. From this point forward, it's really going to be something that amounts to the beginning of the end for the city because the Babylonians and those who follow in their wake (until you get to the time of Alexander when he finishes the job)... they're not going to be content with just being paid a lump sum and calling it good. Tyre is going to start losing its commerce. It's going to be usurped by Babylon and other nations in the area that are in league with Babylon. Babylon allows them and enforces the idea of cutting off Tyre economically from some of the things that the city had a monopoly on—the reason why they got so wealthy. So it's really going to be the beginning of the end for them. Eventually, the city is going to lose its independence and fall. It's going to be very ordinary. You get that feeling when you read through the chapter. I'm going to go down to verse 15. It says:

**<sup>15</sup>“Thus says the Lord God to Tyre: Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in your midst? <sup>16</sup>Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. They will**

clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you. <sup>17</sup> And they will raise a lamentation over you and say to you,

**“How you have perished,  
you who were inhabited from the seas,  
O city renowned,  
who was mighty on the sea;  
she and her inhabitants imposed their terror  
on all her inhabitants!  
<sup>18</sup> Now the coastlands tremble  
on the day of your fall,  
and the coastlands that are on the sea  
are dismayed at your passing.’**

25:00

Why should they worry? Why should they care? Well, because their economic livelihood depended on Tyre in many respects. The region is now going to be controlled by somebody else. Yeah, Tyre is still there. It's still a functioning city with people living in it, but it's not the same place. Everybody that was tied to her fate, her destiny, her wealth, her livelihood... “If she’s doing well, we do well.” That all changes. This is a big deal in the whole region. In verse 20 you actually get even darker language. We'll start in verse 19.

**<sup>19</sup>“For thus says the Lord God: When I make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you, and the great waters cover you, <sup>20</sup> then I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set beauty in the land of the living.**

This refers to an even darker future. You probably recognize it. The writer is using the language of the underworld to describe what is ultimately going to happen to Tyre.

**<sup>20</sup> ...then I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below...**

The Hebrew word there is *eretz*. If you've read *Unseen Realm*, you know that *eretz* can be a term used not just of the earth and the land, but also the underworld where the dead live.

**I will make you to dwell in the *eretz* below, among ruins from of old, with those who go down to the pit.**

So Taylor writes:

In highly figurative language the island city of Tyre is pictured as submerged beneath the waves of the sea.

This is a poetic description; the island didn't actually sink. And it's fitting because the waves represent chaos. If you're a victim of chaos, you go underneath the waves. Sheol—the place of the dead, the Abyss—was a watery place in Israelite cosmology. The portrayal fits. Taylor:

But these become the waves of the mythological cosmic flood, the waters of chaos, which have engulfed her at last. Similar language is used of Egypt in 31:14–18; 32:13–32; and Isaiah's taunt-song over the king of Babylon deserves comparison also (Isa. 14:4–21) [MH: this language about being in Sheol]. The passage gives the impression that the *pit* (Heb. *bôr*), which is identical with Sheol, is the place of no return and of utter lostness (21). There is no hope of resurrection, simply a murky continuing existence alongside *the people of old* among the ruins of the past.

We don't use words like “underworld.” We use “afterlife.” This is how you have to think about it. The realm of the dead was a place where there were still people. They're the people of old. They're the ones who have been there a long time. This is where all the dead go and they have this cadaverous existence. That language is used here of Tyre, saying basically, “This is your destiny. This is what is going to befall you. There is no resurrection from this place. It's permanent.”

This is why the hope of the righteous that's in the Old Testament was to be extracted from Sheol—to be taken to be with the Lord. You don't have the kind of precise language that you get in the New Testament for the heavenly or hellish afterlife or something like that. It's a very negative place. It's the place where the *rephaim* dead live, who are regarded as these demonic spirits (bad guys). You don't want to stay there; you want to be with the Lord. This is your hope—the hope of getting out. The only way you can get out and escape death is for the Most High God to remove you from that situation, that place, and transplant you to someplace else where he is. This is Old Testament afterlife talk, but it's very familiar to us, too.

30:00

The fact that Tyre is described in this way... Tyre is not the people of God. There is no resurrection for the people of Tyre. “When this happens to you, it's going to be permanent. You're going to be separated from anything positive forever. This

is your destiny.” So it’s a pretty dark description of what is ultimately going to go on here.

We’ve got sort of an immediate set of circumstances going on with the whole loss of economic livelihood (both her and everybody else around her that’s connected to her—everybody’s affected by this). No one thought that by the time Alexander got there he could wipe the rock clean. The place was impregnable. This couldn’t happen. The messaging is fairly clear. If it can happen to Tyre, it can happen anywhere; it can happen to you. Tyre is not going to be an exception. Tyre offended Yahweh, the God of Israel, by gloating over the fact that Yahweh’s presence departed from the land of his inheritance and his people were driven away from their inheritance and from him. They gloated and they’re going to be punished because the same thing awaits them (and even worse) because, whereas God will (in the book of Ezekiel especially) raise up Israel... Remember the “dry bones chapter? We haven’t gotten there yet, but it’s very familiar—that resurrective imagery there. “God’s going to do that with his people, but he ain’t going to do it with you. You’re going to be in the pit, you’re going to be in the abyss with all the critters down there—the people of old and that sort of thing. It’s not where you want to be.” So that’s where the story will end, not here.

In chapter 27 we get a lament of Tyre. Again, this isn’t God saying, “Oh, boy, I wish I hadn’t done that!” So it’s not like God lamenting over what happened. Let’s just jump into the chapter and you’ll get the feel for it.

**The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>“Now you, son of man, raise a lamentation over Tyre, <sup>3</sup>and say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrances to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands, thus says the Lord God:**

**“O Tyre, you have said,  
‘I am perfect in beauty.’  
<sup>4</sup>Your borders are in the heart of the seas;  
your builders made perfect your beauty.  
<sup>5</sup>They made all your planks  
of fir trees from Senir;  
they took a cedar from Lebanon  
to make a mast for you.  
<sup>6</sup>Of oaks of Bashan  
they made your oars;  
they made your deck of pines  
from the coasts of Cyprus,  
inlaid with ivory.**

**<sup>7</sup>Of fine embroidered linen from Egypt  
was your sail,  
serving as your banner;  
blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah  
was your awning.  
<sup>8</sup>The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad  
were your rowers;  
your skilled men, O Tyre, were in you;  
they were your pilots.  
<sup>9</sup>The elders of Gebal and her skilled men were in you,  
caulking your seams;  
all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in you  
to barter for your wares.**

In essence, what you have here in this lament ("son of man, raise up a lament for Tyre")... If you're looking at it in a modern English translation, this is going to be put in poetic stanzas. You have a poem that casts Tyre as a ship, which is kind of fitting because they were seafaring people (sort of the "Good Ship Tyre"). It's cast as a ship, and it's fitted out with all the best stuff. It's expertly built, expertly crafted, expertly crewed, it's built from the best materials by the leading craftsmen of the day—all that stuff. It's not an exaggeration where in verse 3, God says, "You have said 'I am perfect in beauty.'" That was kind of true; there wasn't anything like her. Nothing like her. In verses 10 and 11, the prophet adds:

**<sup>10</sup>"Persia and Lud and Put were in your army as your men of war.**

They had mercenaries fighting for them. In verses 12-25 (I'm not going to read the whole thing, just a sampling here), you get a list of all the cities and places that traded with Tyre. By the way, if you're reading a King James here, there are going to be a lot of disconnects between modern translations of this whole section (the whole chapter, really) and the King James because there are a lot of textual problems in this passage that are only going to get sorted out through modern text discoveries (like Qumran). That's sort of a sidebar. So verse 12:

**<sup>12</sup>"Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of every kind; silver, iron, tin, and lead they exchanged for your wares. <sup>13</sup>Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they exchanged human beings [MH: they were slave traders] and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. <sup>14</sup>From Beth-togarmah they exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your wares. <sup>15</sup>The men of Dedan traded with you. Many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony.**

35:00

You go through the list and there's just a whole grocery list of things that get traded with Tyre and places that are doing it. This is New York City. This is the commercial capital of the region. The "Good Ship Tyre" is the place where it all happens. This is where the world trades. They're the seafaring people at the top of the heap here, and they benefit from it immensely.

A couple of things to observe here... Again, I'm not going to read through the whole chapter because it's basically just more of this, "Tyre is wonderful; look at all the trade that she did." And then in verses 25-36, Tyre gets shipwrecked because it's an analogy to the destruction that we read about in chapter 26. But I just want to make a few other observations—things that we can get from this chapter. On its own, this is sort of window-dressing leading up to chapter 28, which is what we really want to focus on with Tyre as far as the king and the backdrop of the divine rebellion and the whole Genesis 3/serpent question and all that (we have to wait until next time to do that). But as far as this, I just want to point out a few things that I think are interesting and that I think the listeners might think are interesting.

First of all, if you read through this chapter (I've given you enough of it to give you the feel for it), all of these locations (these places that Tyre is trading with) need to be... it's going to sound like I'm pointing out the obvious, but it actually does need to be pointed out. All these locations need to be accessible by means of the sea and waterways leading to the sea. That is, they all need to be situated in the eastern Mediterranean or the Black Sea area, the Aegean Sea right there.

You say, "Big deal; who cares?" Well, did you catch some of the place names that we read? Tubal, Meshech, Beth-togarmah... Folks, contrary to what you may have read in some popular prophecy book, these places are not Russia. When we get to Ezekiel 38 and 39, we're going to look at other reasons why the prince of Rosh, Tubal, Meshech, Togarmah, and these places are not Russia and these aren't cities in Russian territory. That is utterly bogus. It is utterly without merit. There are textual reasons in Ezekiel 38 to conclude that. But think about it here: we're talking about Tyre. Moscow is not Meshech. Moscow is over 800 miles from the Black Sea, and it's not connected by a waterway. What you need in this passage is these places need to be sea-accessible, accessible by ship. This is maritime trading. You've got to be right there on the sea at a port, or you've got to have some waterway that you can get to the sea. Sure, you could say that land traders could bring their goods to the ports and all that stuff. They could. Almost 900 miles? And even if you say they made the trip from Meshech/Moscow to a port, the port still isn't Meshech. This is not Russian territory. It violates biblical geography, not to mention common sense, to say that. But you'll have prophecy "experts" go to Ezekiel 38 and 39 (they probably never even look at Ezekiel 27... that's a boring chapter) and they'll go up there and talk about the prince of Rosh and Russia and Meshech and Moscow and all this stuff. It's nonsense. You

basically just have to ignore biblical geography to do this kind of stuff. Block has a nice summary in his commentary of some of these. I'm going to pick out some of the more interesting ones and just read what he says to you.

*Javan*, the standard OT designation for the Greek world, is related etymologically to "Ionians."

Again, that's Asia Minor, the Aegean area.

40:00

*Tubal* or Tabal was the territorial designation of the interior Anatolian kingdom [MH: That's Asia Minor—Turkey, the Aegean Sea to the west there and the Mediterranean to the south.] known to the Assyrians as *Bīt Buritash*. This landlocked kingdom, between the Halys River [waterway] and the Taurus River [waterway] in Asia Minor, was bounded on the west by Meshech, on the south by Hilakku, on the east by Melidu and Til-garimmu (Beth-togarmah), and on the north by Kasku. While there is no evidence that Lydia/Phrygia ever ruled over Tubal, Sargon II's annals report that he squelched an Anatolian revolt in which Mitâ of Mushki was allied with Tabalu.

Here's the point: scholars know where these cities are. They know where they *were* and they know where they *are*. These terms show up in ancient texts, whether they're Assyrian texts or Hittite texts (one of the languages of Anatolia). These are not mysteries. This is not Russia. We either throw all of the Ancient Near Eastern evidence to the wind or we just ignore it (or, more likely, we're just ignorant of it) and we just throw biblical geography out the window, or we don't. We're either going to interpret the Bible in its own context or we're not. It's real simple. This Russia nonsense... frankly, we need to stop the madness. I don't know any other way to say it. Just stop the madness. Quit using the Cold War as your hermeneutic for understanding this passage or passages like Ezekiel 38 and 39. Back to Block:

*Meshech*, to be identified with Mushku/Mušku in neo-Assyrian sources, [MH: again, no mystery] was also located in central Anatolia.

*Beth-togarmah*. Gen. 10:3 identifies Togarmah (along with Ashkenaz and Riphath) as the son of Gomer and the nephew of Javan, Meshech, and Tubal. Most scholars equate the name with the capital of Kammanu (Kummanni), known in Hittite texts as *Tegarama*, in Akkadian as *Til-garimmu*, and in classical sources as Gauraena (modern Gurun, a district of Turkey - ancient Anatolia).

Again, we are not talking about Russia. If you didn't get it already, the point is that the Russian nonsense is not just about misreading words in Ezekiel 38 and 39, which we'll get to. It also involves violating biblical geography and throwing all the Ancient Near Eastern comparative material out the window. If that's what you

want to do, be warmed and filled—but that's not responsible biblical interpretation.

The second thought I wanted to leave you with as we wrap up here is: What was the actual outcome historically, closer to Ezekiel's day as opposed to what we read earlier back in chapter 26 about Tyre and Alexander and all that? Anchor Bible Dictionary has a good summary here of the way this winds up:

Mercenaries served the Tyrian empire (Ezek 27:10–11), but there is never any mention of a military campaign on the mainland in which Tyre was involved. The Tyrians knew how to defend their island stubbornly, as seen from the annals of the Assyrian kings, and also from the Tyrian records (Josephus, *Ant* 9.287; Ezek 29:18); but they always preferred, if possible, to pay tribute, which was redistributed to Tyre's customers...

Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Pharaoh Neco in 605 b.c. changed the political map of W Asia (cf. 2 Kgs 24:7). From that time until the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 b.c., Tyre was the main foe of Babylon in Asia. While there were contacts between Tyre and Judah (Jer 27:3) and between Tyre and the Philistine city-states (Jer 47:4), Tyre was jubilant when Jerusalem fell in 586 b.c. (Ezek 26:2). The Tyrian king did not, however, recognize the immediate danger; only too late did Tyre recognize the political and strategic line of Nebuchadnezzar, who, after the fall of Jerusalem, turned to Tyre and besieged it to safeguard his [trade] lines for his ultimate goal, the conquest of Egypt.

He's basically going to use them. He's going to use their navy and their wealth to turn and conquer Egypt.

45:00

Josephus quotes the Phoenician (= Tyrian) archives (*AgAp* 1.156) and also Philostratus' history (*Antiquities* 10.228), which record that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre 13 years (ca. 585–573/2). This siege is mentioned by Ezekiel (29:17–18), who says that Nebuchadnezzar will carry off much booty from Egypt (29:19) as a recompense for his failure **[MH: remember he never destroys Tyre]**. Apparently the long siege ended with a treaty: the royal Tyrian house had to reside in Babylon **[MH: again, they're losing their independence here]**. Although a Tyrian king could rule in Tyre, next to him a Babylonian commissioner was appointed with a seat in Ushu. In contrast to other royal families living in Babylon, the Tyrians could always fetch the heir apparent from Babylon (*AgAp* 1.156–59). Yet Tyre's power had been totally exhausted; its overseas territories were taken over by Carthage with the exception of Tyrian possessions in Cyprus.

They lose their independence permanently, their wealth is in decline and eventually they become ordinary players. They are *owned* (if we can use that modern expression) by Babylon, and they never really recover from this

financially. Again, the city was still there. They weren't totally destroyed. The rock isn't wiped clean. That's going to happen with Alexander, but they are never the same. And that's the point of what Ezekiel is saying here. "You say in your heart, 'I am perfect in beauty... I'm this, that, and the other thing.' Yeah, you are, but that's going to come to an end and this is the way it's going to happen. You gloated when Nebuchadnezzar came in there, did what he did to Jerusalem. But guess what? News flash! The same guy is going to do this to you and you're not going to be what you have always been." And that was how the story ends.

Again, all this is backdrop, really, to chapter 28, because then we're going to get into how Ezekiel uses the story of a divine rebel who's just the ultimate example of hubris and splendor and power and wonderfulness, and how that divine being rebels—transgresses Yahweh and is brought down. If you've read *Unseen Realm*, you know where we're going with that thought. But next time we'll hit chapter 28 and I'm going to take the time to go through a lot that's in the chapter and talk about why a lot of translations and a lot of other scholars take a different view than me. There are reasons why they do that. They're not really very good reasons, but they're understandable reasons. So we're going to devote a lot of our attention to that next time. So if you're looking for Ezekiel 28 and Eden and the anointed cherub and all that, not this time, but next.

**TS:** All right, Mike. That's a good build-up for next week. I'm already ready for that! (laughter)

**MH:** I like to read stuff like the Alexander conquest because they just didn't give up! It's kind of like Masada, where the Romans used the Jewish slaves to build the ramp up to the top of Masada, knowing that the Jews wouldn't shoot their own. They could be brutal, clever... they did crazy things to win.

**TS:** Next week, Mike.

**MH:** Yep, next week back into Eden a little bit through Ezekiel. We'll see how that goes.

**TS:** All right. I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.