Some of Ezekiel’s peculiar promises seemed to be unfulfilled, including the following:

“...I will also scrape her dust from her” (Ezekiel 26:4).

Tyre will become “like the top of a rock” (Ezekiel 26:4).

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

“They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water” (Ezekiel 26:12).

“Thou shalt be built no more” (Ezekiel 26:14).

For nearly three hundred years these prophecies appeared to be inaccurate. Nebuchadnezzar conquered the mainland city but was unable to subdue all of Tyre because of its strategic position on the island. After a few decades Tyre regained her wealth and splendor, though the ruined city on the shore was not rebuilt, and the island fortification became the central city.

Then in 332 B.C., Alexander the Great swept out of the northern Mediterranean world. He moved south with his forces and camped on the ruins of ancient Tyre, isolating the inhabitants on the island offshore. Tyre had supposedly made a peaceful alliance with the Greeks, but when Alexander requested permission to bring his troops into Tyre to worship their gods and was refused, he laid siege to Tyre—a difficult task since the city lay on an island a half mile off the shore.

James Hastings described what followed: “The memorable siege began. Alexander built a mole [causeway] 200 ft. wide out towards the island. It was repeatedly destroyed. The defense was desperate and successful, till Alexander invested the city with a fleet of 224 ships. Tyre was stormed, 8000 of her inhabitants massacred, 2000 crucified on the shore, and 30,000 sold into slavery. Tyre ceased to be an island, and henceforth was permanently joined to the mainland. Only a blunt headland to-day suggests the existence of the former island fortress. The mole is now 1/2 mile broad.” (A Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. “Tyre.”)

Fallows noted how Ezekiel’s prophecy that Tyre would be scraped clean and made like the top of a rock was fulfilled: “So utterly were the ruins of old Tyre thrown into the sea, that its exact site is confessedly undeterminable, although the ruins of nearly fifty cities near Rome, which perished almost 2,500 years ago, testify that the extinction of every trace of a city is a sort of miracle.” (Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. “Tyre,” p. 1682.)

Today there is no island opposite Tyre, but a close examination of the coastline in that vicinity will show a small peninsula jutting into the sea. Because of its configuration and the prevailing breezes, local fishermen come to the barren, rocky outcrop to spread their nets to dry.

The prophet Ezekiel certainly met the criteria outlined in Deuteronomy 18:18–22 for determining whether a prophet speaks for the Lord.


Senir (see Ezekiel 27:5) is Mount Hermon. Phut (see v. 10) is Libya. Javan (see v. 13) is Greece. Togarmah (see v. 14) is Armenia. Syria (see v. 16) was known in ancient times as Aram (see v. 16).


Zidon, or Sidon, a sister city with Tyre, also had been a thorn in Israel’s side. If the Israelites had followed Moses’ instructions to destroy all the Canaanites (see Deuteronomy 7:1–5; Judges 1:31), Tyre and Sidon would have been Israelite cities for nearly eight centuries by Ezekiel’s time and their history significantly different.


Alexander and Alexander wrote: “By his insufferable pride in placing himself among the gods, Pharaoh has exposed his whole land to God’s anger. But he will learn who is God!” (Eerdmans’ Handbook, p. 425.)

Syene (see Ezekiel 29:10) was a city in the south of Egypt, far up the Nile. Pathros (see v. 14) was the name for upper Egypt, or the south part of Egypt. Once the seat of leadership for Egypt was driven up to Pathros, Egypt became “the basest of the kingdoms” and never did “exalt itself any more above the nations” (v. 15). From that point on, Egypt ceased to play an important role in world affairs.


Nebuchadnezzar had not been able to conquer the island city (see Notes and Commentary on Ezekiel 26:1–14). When the long siege of Tyre was ended, many of the Tyrians loaded their wealth on their ships and escaped to Carthage. Thus Nebuchadnezzar lost some of the spoil of one of the world’s richest cities (see Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible . . . with a Commentary and Critical Notes, 4:303).