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Ezekiel 26 "I Told You So" January 9, 2022

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to Ezekiel Chapter 26. Ezekiel 26.

I'm extremely grateful for God's word, I hope you are as well, because it's certainly our hope and our confidence. In fact, I hope that this morning's study through this one chapter will convince you again of God's truthfulness and dependability and power.

This is going to be a short study. If you're worried about getting to the breakfast ahead of the rest, you'll get there this morning. But I don't want to add to it because I think the lesson speaks for itself, you're going to get out of here early. I'll have to take a cut in pay, we won't be here as long. But I hope that you'll leave here with your heart stirred that that Bible on your lap is worth spending some time in.

Ezekiel was taken in the second siege of the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 597 BC. He was 25 years old. He was taken to a farming community along the Kebar River, where for the next five years he would labor as a farmer. But in 593 BC, at 30 years old, God spoke to him and said, "I'm going to use you as My prophet." And the Lord will begin to use him then to speak to the captivity; those that are already taken.

The Lord would speak through Ezekiel through the first 24 chapters of this book. And then in Chapter 24, in 588 BC, the Lord said to Ezekiel, "I'm not going to give you any more words from Me for My people until the siege of Jerusalem is finished." And we know that historically that siege began in 588, lasted 18 months. They built walls around the city, Nebuchadnezzar did. They starved the people out. They had to give up.

During that time of silence from the Lord regarding God's people, the Lord began to speak to Ezekiel to deliver messages to countries around Jerusalem that had an effect on God's people. He would speak to warn them, to counsel them, to warn

them of judgment. From Chapter 25 through Chapter 32, the focus is all not upon Israel in captivity, but upon the nations surrounding them. God speaks to them about their foreign affairs, about the fact that God is sovereign; that His ways will work no matter whether you believe in Him or not; that He will rule over all.

Sixteen nations are addressed in these many chapters. The Lord will speak to Ammon and Moab, to Edom and to the Philistines, to Tyre and to Sidon, to Egypt and to Ethiopia, and Libya, and Assyria, and on and on. And every one of those chapters are dated with a time stamp so that you know when it was delivered and you can put it into the historical time frame.

Chapter 23, for example, was written in 591; Chapter 24, a couple of years later, and so on until we come to this chapter, which was written in 586, which was also the very year that Nebuchadnezzar, after 18 months, would overthrow the city of Jerusalem and that third wave, and all of the people would then be dragged away to Babylon.

We're not given the month but the year in verse 1. But this morning I wanted to just spend a few minutes with you, because this is one prophecy, 21 verses, that God declared, being God, that these things would take place. And I wanted to focus on that one issue that we've entitled this message this morning "I Told You So."

Verse 1 says this: "It came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me and said, 'Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, "Aha! She is broken who was the gateway of the peoples; but she is now turned over to me; and I shall be filled; and she shall be laid waste.'"

The 11th year of Zedekiah's reign is indeed 586 BC, the year that Jerusalem and Judah would be overthrown. If you ever read this word, "aha," it is a word that God seems to hate. It is a word of taunt most of the time that you find in the scriptures, and when you taunt the Lord, that's not a good idea.

Tyre was located along the Mediterranean. It is where today would be in modern day Lebanon. It was one of the great commercial centers certainly of this time. It was run by the Phoenicians. They were primarily ship merchants of the ancient world. She had the greatest Navy certainly. They

were known as a seagoing people. They had always viewed and their relationship with Jerusalem and the Jews was one of jealousy and competitiveness, and historically, if you are into ancient history, Carthage and Ithaca were cities of Tyre.

God's reference to her reaction to the fall of Jerusalem of great joy, seeing her competition falling in the hopes that somehow, they can take her place, watching with gladness as the people suffered and as they were being dragged away to captivity, and the Lord's response through the prophet is, Not so fast. Not so fast.

Verse 3, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: 'Behold, I'm against you, Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre, 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 spreading nets in the midst of the sea, as I have spoken,' saith the Lord; 'it shall become the plunder of the nations. And her daughter villages which are in the fields shall be slain by the sword. And then they shall know that I am the Lord.'"

The Lord begins by declaring through the prophet that many nations will be sent against this wicked city that longs to see Jerusalem in ruins. And how that He was going to take this place, scrape her like the top of the rock, and leave her for a place that fishing nets could be laid out in the sun and to dry. Pretty amazing prophecy to a large thriving cultural center, commercial center.

Beginning in verse 7, the Lord then changes the personal pronoun to "he," because it is Nebuchadnezzar that will first come up against Tyre at this time. We read in verse 7, "For thus saith the Lord: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the king of kings, with horses, and chariots, and horsemen, and with an army of many people. And he will slay with the sword your daughter's villages in the field; and he will heap up against you a siege, and build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. And he will bring his battering rams against your walls, and with axes he will bring down your towers. And because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the sound of the horsemen, and the wagons, and the chariots, and when he enters into your city, as men come into a city that has been breached. With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets;

slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground.'" "

But then notice in verse 12 the pronoun changes to "they." And they will plunder, and they will make an end. And then again there'll be the speaking of many nations, because we know from history that Nebuchadnezzar came against Tyre, but they never were able to make a full end of this town and this stronghold.

When Israel was attacked, or Judah was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar in 588, when the city succumbed to his pressure in 586, Nebuchadnezzar figured he was in that area anyway, let's see if I can clear out and besiege everyone in the coastal plains, and he came after Tyre. It was a sea village, if you will, a seacoast village. Her walls, historically, extended into the ocean. They became much more difficult to starve out than Jerusalem had been, because they had access to fishing. They were sea-going folks. And the people of Tyre had within their walls an absolutely endless food source. The springs of Ras El-Ain, which is still in Tyre today, or at least in Lebanon, provided, and still provides to this day, 10 million gallons of fresh water every day. It seems to be an endless source of water.

Tyre was in a pretty good position even though the Babylonians ruled the world. They had a fence, a wall around their city that was kind of impregnable. It extended into the ocean. They had food and they had water. Unlike Jerusalem which could be starved out in 18 months, they could stay there endlessly.

Add to the fact that Babylon had virtually no navy. In fact, very few folks had navy at this time. They really couldn't go into the sea very well. Instead of an 18-month siege like Jerusalem, this siege historically lasted 13 years, until 573 BC, with absolutely no results. Nebuchadnezzar was very frustrated with what he was facing as a result of the attacks and all. Somewhere in that time period he found the Lord of Israel, Daniel Chapter 5.

But needless to say, after 13 years of siege, Nebuchadnezzar gave up. He did take out all of the villages that were surrounding the city itself. He did take out anyone that came out of the city, but he never got in.

After 13 years, though, something interesting had happened within the walls. Tyre residents had begun boating all of

their possessions to an island a half a mile offshore. By the time Nebuchadnezzar's armies finally were able to break through the walls, everything was gone, and the people were just sitting offshore waving, completely safe. In anger he razed the city. He left it in rubble and ruin. He destroyed everything in its place. But he really didn't get anything from them except to just push them offshore.

We read in verse 12, "'They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; and they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, and your timber, and your soil into the midst of the water. And I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps, and they'll remember them no more. And I will make you like the top of a rock; and they shall be a place for spreading of nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, I am the Lord who has spoken,' says the Lord God."

If you continue in history, especially since we're looking at God's specific word to a city, this reference of "they" takes a huge or a large step, I think, forward in history, to the time of Tyre and the city of Tyre during the days of Alexander the Great, because this city lay in ruins for the next 252 years. It just lay there. No one rebuilt it, no one came to deal with it. But in 322 BC Alexander began his march against the Persian Empire, which was at that time the world power. But he was a little concerned that if he turned his back upon the Phoenicians, which were still very powerful, that they might move against Greece while he was away fighting with Persia, he thought it the best war strategy to first go after Tyre, and the hub of the Phoenician structure, and cripple them before moving on.

He invited them to surrender, but they were living a half a mile offshore, and no one had boats like they. They laughed at him. "Come and get us, big guy." He tried to get some boats. He went to fight. History will tell you that he lost thousands of men in battle. But he's not so easy. To, he's not a guy that you turn away so easily. His ambition was endless.

He went back to the ruins of the original city, which had laid there all of this time, and he said to his armies, "Push it all into the ocean." And for eight months, 24 hours a day, thousands of people, of slave labor, they began to push everything from this destroyed city and county in the ocean, and they began to build what was a causeway to this offshore island. Day by day the army just pushed things into the

ocean. And they would eventually, in eight months, be able to walk across the half a mile. The people that stayed there and didn't get into the boats to leave were immediately slaughtered, and those who got in boats and tried to land somewhere were caught. Their fall became a lesson historically, at least during the time of the Greek occupation and Alexander's rule, that you shouldn't mess with Greece. And as a result of this fall of Tyre, historically city after city just began to surrender to Alexander without any kind of fight at all.

The prophecy of God given through Ezekiel here was not completely fulfilled for 252 years. He had told them of what their future would hold, but God was in no hurry. Ezekiel would not live to see what he had spoken fully come to pass. But come to pass it would, as everything that God has ever told us. With the advantage of history we are able to say, "Amen. Lord, you did exactly what you said." Tyre was swept clean, like a tabletop rock. Fisherman could spread their nets upon it. And it would never be rebuilt.

We read in verse 15, "Thus saith the Lord God to Tyre: 'Will the coastlands not shake at the sound of your fall, and when the wounded cry, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? Then all of the princes of sea will come down from their thrones, and lay aside their robes, and take off their embroidered garments; and they will clothe themselves with trembling; and they will sit upon the ground, trembling every moment, and be astonished at you. And they will take up a lamentation to you, and they will say to you: "How have you perished, O one inhabited by seafaring men, O renowned city, who was strong at sea, she and her inhabitants, who caused their terror to be on all of her inhabitants! Now the coastlands will tremble on the day of your fall; yes, the coastlands by the sea are troubled at your departure." For thus saith the Lord: 'When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you, and your waters cover you, then I will bring you down from those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lowest part of the earth, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you might never be inhabited; and I shall establish My glory in the land of the living. And I will make you a terror, and you shall be no more; and those who sought for you shall never be found again,' saith the Lord."

There is no modern-day Tyre, at least not this Tyre, a Palestinian stronghold. There is a Tyre in south Lebanon

today, if you've ever been to Lebanon. It's a beautiful place. It's kind of a dangerous place. But at the same time, it is not the same place of the Old Testament stronghold, which has not been discovered. Now, archeologists have found an undersea causeway that leads off the shore. They found it about 1830, I believe. The spring, the Ras al-Ain spring, is still in that area. It still produces a lot of water. They can approximate where the city might be, but topographically there's really no way to say this used to be a city. God has removed them completely.

Nine times in this one chapter the claim is made that the words spoken here were indeed spoken by the Lord. Nine times the word of the Lord was given to me, or thus saith the Lord. It is the same claim made thousands of times more throughout the Bible as God declares various things to come. And even in the book of Ezekiel, the declarations he claimed were from the Lord were either just that, or they were a figment of his imagination and the creative writing of a prophet. It is indeed what God says that He will do, or we can lay it all aside.

What do you suppose the chances are that Ezekiel might have simply made a good guess? That he said to a city that was still standing and powerful and strong, "You laughed at my people's dilemma. I'm going to be sure that you don't exist any longer. They're going to come and take you out. They're going to throw your things into the midst of the sea. You're going to be like a tabletop mountain where the fishermen can put out their nets. You're going to wish that you had never started with the aha's. And you'll never be rebuilt." Those are pretty good guesses. A very specific prophecy fulfilled over a 250-year time frame and still in force to this day. The city has never been found, never been rebuilt. Nobody knows where it actually stood. They could guess. But if you looked around, you can't go, that used to be a city. And I'm telling you, you go to Israel, every corner around there, that used to be a city, that used to be a city. You can tell. The foundations are everywhere. Not this foundation.

Note how specific God's word is here. Nebuchadnezzar would conquer the city; that other nations would contribute to their demise; that the city would be flattened like a rock, becoming a place for fishermen to spread their nets; that the stones and the timbers would be thrown into the midst of the sea; and that cities surrounding them would also fall, and the news of their fall would be great, and it would cause fear

in everyone that read it, and the original city would not be rebuilt. That's just one prophecy, one chapter in God's Word.

Someone estimated one time, and I don't know how they came up with the numbers, I'll just tell them to you. You can believe them or not, it doesn't matter that the odds of getting one of them right with all of those little complex conditions was about one in 80 million.

Considering all of God's word and how none of it has failed, you should have no problem opening it and reading it with absolute confidence. History bears it out. In fact, the greatest proof that you have that this is God's word is the historical accuracy that is found in it. Prophecy is the proof of God's wisdom and His rightness, and His dependency. His Word is sure. And because of that we can approach it, hopefully as we do, with tremendous confidence and with great care that we should study it well, because in it God speaks about your life and our sin, our future, and His promises, His goodness. It is absolutely accurate. It is God's word.

What should that mean to you? Well, it should mean that God truly did make you, and He truly does love you; and He knows you, wants to spend eternity with you. I only know that because the Bible says so. I'd like to think so anyway, but that wouldn't be good enough, would it? It means that God has a wonderful plan of salvation, a plan for your life here. He wants you to get from here to there. He's provided a way that you can find Him.

It means that God did send His only begotten Son into the world to die for the guilt of our sins so that the barrier between you and Him can be removed. He's made a way whereby you can come to Him. It means if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them, to cleanse from you all unrighteousness. It means that God meant what He said: You must come to Him by faith. That there's no works that you can do, no accomplishments that you can offer that will make you right with Him. You'll have to come and believe in His method of salvation.

It means that you can look forward to a life where, if you've given the Lord your life, God will meet your needs as a good Heavenly Father. He knows what you need before you ask. He anticipates. He plans ahead.

It means that you can realize that God's thoughts towards you



are constant. You're always on His mind. He only has good in store for you, not evil. He wants to give you a hope and a life of peace. He would like you to live free from fret and worrying. He would like you to have a joy unspeakable and full of glory. He will care for you as a father should.

One day it means that He will return for you, or else you'll go to be with Him. It means that God will finish the work that He started. It means that He will never leave you or forsake you; that He is for you and not against you; that he knows you inside and out, and He loves you anyway.

The word of God is sure. And most of these prophetic books, if you follow them along, will be a big "I told you so," and you can write it almost upon every one of these chapters, I told you so.

One chapter that should convince you God can be trusted. One little slice of history that if you just take a minute, go open your computers. Let Google help you learn the Bible. Go look what happened to Tyre. It's all there for you. It's not like this is a big secret.

And if this doesn't convince you, there are 1,188 more chapters to study; and 31,000 more verses to read, so that you might know God isn't kidding around. This is all about Him for you.

That should settle it for you. I hope that you'll study your Bible with that kind of conviction in heart. God didn't write these things to just amuse you, but to assure you; not just to fill your mind with facts, but to fill your heart with hope. He's going to do exactly what He said. And one day when you stand before the Lord, you'll hear this, I'm sure: "I told you so. I told you so." Good to know, don't you think?

I told you we'd be done early. Let's pray.