

Text: Ezek 28.20-24,

Tonight we will look at several prophecies about ancient cities that seem to have received the full weight of the prophecies made about them.

The cities we will consider tonight are Sidon and Thebes.

Sidon exists today, but it has frequently been under attack and so the prophecy against it predicted a violent history that continues to this day.

Thebes is known by other names, and the ancient city is completely overrun, though it has spawned a thriving tourist industry to this day.

I. Sidon: Ezek 28.20-24

“Sidon was located about twenty-three miles north of Tyre and was much more exposed to military assault. One of the most infamous Sidonians was the woman who married Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab sought to strengthen his reign over the Northern Kingdom and took Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon, for his wife (1 Kgs 16:31–34). This move proved unwise because Jezebel reinstated Baal worship in Israel and hastened the fall of the Northern Kingdom by contributing to its moral and spiritual decay.”¹

A. Elements of the prophecy:

What is God’s objective in the prophecy against Sidon? (22)

To demonstrate his own glory, to prove his deity

What three things will fall against Sidon? (23)

1. pestilence
2. blood
3. sword

Again, what was God’s objective in this judgement? (23b)

To prove his deity (know that I am the Lord)

¹ Lamar Eugene Cooper, *Ezekiel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 17 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 270–71.

Last, what does v. 24 indicate about the final fulfilment of this prophecy?

That Sidon will no longer be a problem for Israel (this has not yet occurred)

B. The history of Sidon since Ezekiel's prophecy (after Nebuchadnezzar):

Persia (beginning 6th c. BC — 500s): besieged, then destroyed.

"When all hope of saving their city was gone, 40,000 citizens chose to die rather than submit to Persian vengeance. They shut themselves up with their wives and children, set fire to their dwellings, and perished amid the flames."²

Crusaders (Dec 4, 1110) besieged and took the city

Saladin (1187)

Crusaders (1197)

Ayyubid Sultanate (1249)

Mongols (1260)

Egyptians (took it from Ottomans, war 1839-1841)

British, Turks, Austrians (took it back 1841)

20th century, passed from French control to British to independence, but subject to the ongoing attacks of Syria, Hezbollah, not to mention Israel as part of those conflicts

"blood to her streets"

Sidon is still a potential source of trouble to Israel, so v. 24 has not yet been fulfilled.

II. Thebes: (Ezekiel 30.14-16)

Thebes was a magnificent city in ancient times. Many contemporary observers spoke with awe about her magnificent buildings.

² John Urquhart, *The Wonders of Prophecy: Or, What Are We to Believe?* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.), 20.

Today it is the site of Luxor and the temple of Karnak, relics of the past and part of Egypt's tourism industry.

Thebes was known in the Bible by the name: "No-Amon." In the NAU, we find this name in Nahum 3.8, an earlier prophecy against the Assyrians, looking back to a previous destruction of Thebes by the Assyrians.

Amon was the principle god of Thebes, whom the Greeks recognized as their Zeus, or the Romans as Jupiter. The first part of the name, "No," is how the city is designated in the Hebrew Bible.

Nahum is prophesying against Assyria, looking back to the fall of Thebes (No-Amon). He says to Assyria, you are not better than Thebes, whom you destroyed.

Ezekiel 30.14-16 gives a prophecy of the destruction of Thebes (No – KJV).

What are the three judgements prophesied in these verses?

(14) "execute judgements on Thebes"

(15) "cut off the hordes of Thebes"

(16) "Thebes will be breached"

These words were written during Nebuchadnezzar's reign. In 525 BC, **Cambyse** the Persian conquered Egypt and burned Thebes.

"Its majestic temples were consumed with fire; and the power of the victorious host was bent to overthrow, or mar, its colossal statues. Although the city sprang up again, it never regained its ancient splendour. The hand of an irreversible judgment was laid also upon the sources of its wealth and greatness. It ceased to be Egypt's chief city."³

Finally, after the Greeks destroyed the Persian empire and one of its generals, Ptolemy, took Egypt for his own (after the death of Alexander). Opposition repeatedly arose in Thebes, until 89 BC when Ptolemy Lathyrus, the grandfather of Cleopatra, defeated and destroyed Thebes.

³ Urquhart, 27.

“In 91 BC, another revolt broke out. In the following years, Thebes was subdued, and the city turned into rubble. ... In the first century AD, Strabo described Thebes as having been relegated to a mere village.”⁴

“It was almost entirely levelled to the ground, and the words of the fourteenth and fifteenth verses found a complete fulfilment. God had executed judgments in No; its multitude was cut off, and has never returned.”⁵

⁴ “Thebes, Egypt,” in *Wikipedia*, April 4, 2024,

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thebes,_Egypt&oldid=1217212041.

⁵ Urquhart, *Wonders of Prophecy*.