

The Stunningly Unique Word of God

- A snapshot of the Bible today
- Its many splendored glory
- “Fingerprints” of God: Predictive Prophecy
- The Bible’s own answers to:
 - An “easy” pop quiz
 - How do I properly understand it? (hermeneutics)
 - Where did the Bible come from? (canonicity)
 - How do I use it effectively?

The image shows the front cover of an antique Holy Bible. The cover is bound in dark, heavily worn black leather. The edges are frayed and the surface is cracked. The words "HOLY BIBLE" are embossed in gold lettering near the top. The book is centered against a white background, which is flanked by black vertical bars on either side.

HOLY BIBLE

**Why
bother?**

Consider just the number of languages:

- 7,295 languages in the world; 4,000 in India alone
- 771 complete Bibles (up 2 from last month)
- 1,760 NTs (up 5) • 1,356 portions (up 7)
- Total = 3,887, **nearly 2x from 43 years ago**
- **4,155** where work is currently in progress (up 19)
- At current 14/month, **all languages in 20 years**

What test does God himself propose?

This is what the Lord says – Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, **and what is to come – yes, let him foretell what will come.** — Isaiah 44:6-7

Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. **I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come.** I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. — Isaiah 46:8-10

Who is this man?

Micah 5:2

Zechariah 9:9

Psalms 22:6-8

Isaiah 7:14

Psalms 41:9

Zechariah 12:10

Isaiah 60:3

Zechariah 11:12-13

Isaiah 53:5-6, 10-12

Isaiah 40:3

Isaiah 52:2-3

Psalms 34:20

Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah 53:7-9

Isaiah 53:9

Isaiah 9:1-2

Isaiah 50:6

Psalms 16:10

Isaiah 61:1

Psalms 22:1

Daniel 7:13-14

Psalms 78:2-4

Psalms 22:14-18**

and ~300 more!

** Note: Psalm 22 (written ~1000 B.C.) describes **crucifixion**, centuries before it was invented!

This Week:

- (1) There are many 100s of other spectacular, incredibly detailed, fulfilled prophecies about the rise and fall of kingdoms spanning millennia!

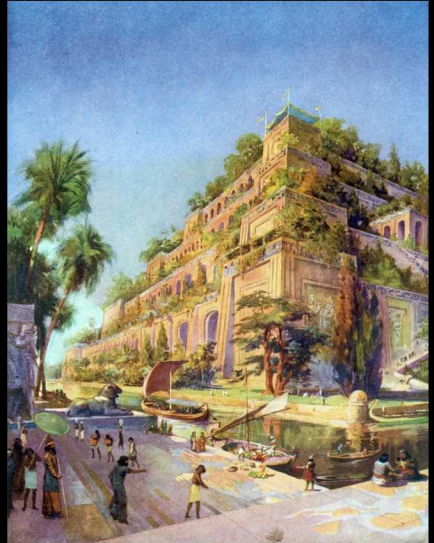
We're going to look at just 2.

- (2) Herm & Knute's Toolkit, starting with *fun* pop quiz

Babylon

- Perhaps the most magnificent city of ancient times, with its famous hanging gardens
- Walls 14-15 miles long
- Enclosing an area of 196 square miles
- Totally self-sufficient in water and food
- Highly advanced in arts & sciences
- Its walls were 187' thick at the base, and 200' tall, with towers another 100'
- Invincible; its armies had conquered the known world

And yet...



Babylon

And yet... God said:



“The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken... it shall be desolate forever” Jeremiah 51:58,62

→ “We totally failed to find any trace of the city walls”

“Babylon will be a heap of ruins... The sea will rise over Babylon; its roaring waves will cover her. Her towns will be desolate, a dry and desert land” Jeremiah 51:42-43

→ 2 months each year the Euphrates overflows making much of it inaccessible; for 10 months, a dry & barren desert

Babylon

- Isaiah calls Cyrus by name (2 centuries before)
- Jeremiah 51:11 (70 years before): “The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon”
- But Alexander the Great decided he would rebuild Babylon and make it his capital.
- Yet in the days of Jesus, its city walls still stood
- Until Julian the Apostate (mid 4th Century)
 - After Constantine converted to Christianity, wanted to destroy Christianity and return Rome to its pagan roots
 - While in a war with Persia near Babylon, Julian completely destroyed its walls lest it provide his enemies any protection
 - His last words per Christian historian Theodoret: “You have conquered, Galilean”
- Ruins discovered in 18th century by British explorer

Babylon Today

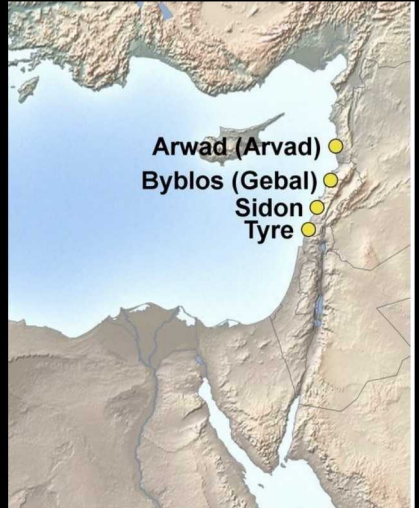


World Heritage Site (aka, a museum)

Ancient Tyre

- Largest and oldest city of Phoenicia (2300 B.C.)
- Ruled the seas, formidable navy and trade ships
- Extremely prosperous, trade center of the world; monopoly on **purple** dye (from sea snails)
- Skilled craftsmen → value added, high-end goods
- King Hiram allied with David; helped build his palace and Solomon's temple
- Mainland settlements
- Invincible fortress city on island ½ mile offshore
- Had weathered multiple assaults from Assyrian empire in 700s B.C.

And yet...



Ancient Tyre



Ancient Tyre

*And yet... **God** ominously said:*

“Son of man, **because Tyre has said of Jerusalem**, ‘Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper,’ **therefore...**”
Ezekiel 26:2

“Son of man, say **to the ruler of Tyre**, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “in the pride of your heart you say, “I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.” But you are a man and not a god... By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries. By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud. **Therefore...**”’”
Ezekiel 28:1-10

Ancient Tyre – Ezekiel 26-28

“I will bring **many nations** against you, **like the waves** of the sea... They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken,” declares the Sovereign Lord.

“...I am going to bring against Tyre **Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon...”

“**They** will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber, and rubble into the sea. ...I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. **You will never be rebuilt**, for I the Sovereign Lord have spoken.”

“...when I make you a desolate city, like cities no longer inhabited, and when I bring the ocean depths over you and its vast waters cover you... You will be sought, but you will never again be found,” declares the Sovereign Lord.

Ezekiel 26:3-5, 7, 12-14, 19, 21

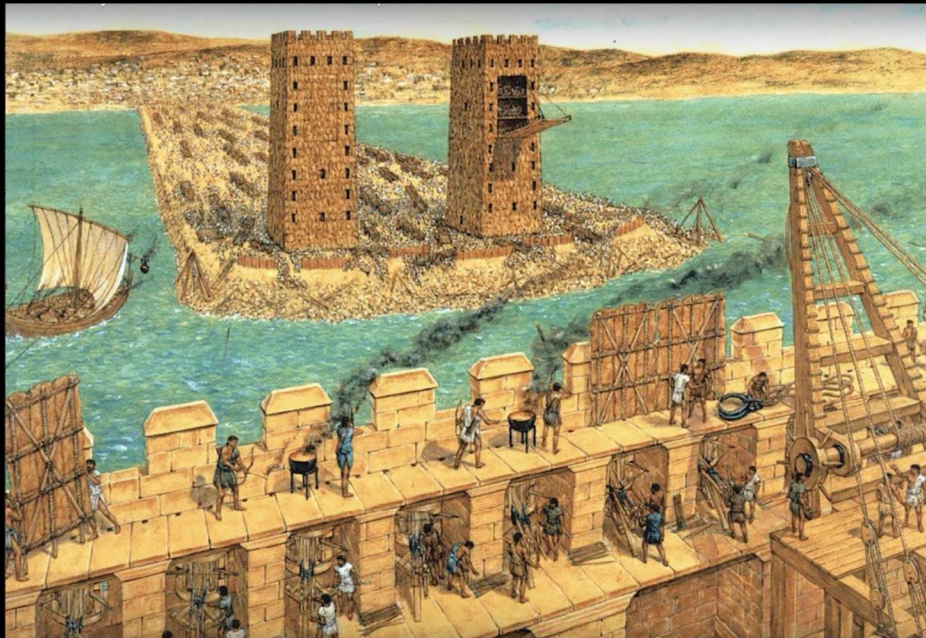
Ancient Tyre – Ezekiel 26-28



After a 13-year siege, Nebuchadnezzar did break thru the walls of the mainland settlements, but by then most had retreated to the island, encircle by its 150' walls. Without a navy, he left it alone.

250 years later, Alexander the Great exactly fulfilled God's judgment in 9 months, in one of the greatest battles in history.

One historian wrote: "Alexander did far more against Tyre than Shalmaneser or Nebuchadnezzar had done. Not content with crushing her, he took care that she never should revive; for he founded Alexandria [in Egypt] as her substitute and changed forever the track of the commerce of the world." (Edward Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, ch. 4)





Aerial photo of Tyre circa 1934. Centuries of sedimentation has turned Alexander's causeway into a peninsula 500 meters wide.

Old Tyre Today



World Heritage Site

Modern Tyre



Challenges to Fulfilled Prophecy

1. Nebuchadnezzar **failed** to fulfill **all** of the prophecy

- “Many nations, like the waves of the sea”
- Fails to acknowledge Bible uses **chiastic** structures
- Shorter term prophecies to confirm longer term

2. Tyre is a modern city that **has been rebuilt**

- **Really?** Rebuilt = “restored, returned to prior existing state”
- Much of ancient Tyre is underwater
- Much of the rest is ruins, preserved as a World Heritage Site
- The modern city of Tyre is nothing like ancient Tyre
 - none of the old parts reused; built in a different place
 - doesn’t remotely resemble the old city: “Queen of the Seas” no longer
 - never again a prominent city; never again controlled world trade

An “Easy” Pop Quiz

1. Who cut off Samson’s hair? (Judges 16:19) _____
2. Noah’s ark landed on Mt. Ararat. (Genesis 8:4) T F
3. Write out the 9th Commandment (Exodus 20:16, Deuteronomy 5:20) _____
4. Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot. (2Kings 2:11) T F
5. How many wisemen visited baby Jesus as he lay in a manger? (Mt 2:11) _____
6. Jesus sweated great drops of blood at Gethsemane. (Luke 22:44) T F
7. When Jesus said, “Where 2 or 3 are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst” (Mt 18:20), he was talking about? _____
8. The Bible uses the word “Antichrist” in which book(s)? _____
9. Write out the 6th Commandment (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17) _____



Elijah's Fiery Chariot?

As the two of them [Elijah and Elisha] were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven **in a whirlwind**. — 2Kings 2:11

Herm & Knute's Toolkit

(Five Hermeneutical Tools)



1. What does the Bible say?

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Act 17:11

<https://biblehub.com/interlinear/john/1.htm>

5616 [e]	2361 [e]	129 [e]	2597 [e]	1909 [e]	3588 [e]	1093 [e]
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Next Week:

- (1) Herm & Knute's Toolkit – Tools 2 thru 5
- (2) Case studies in using the Tools
- (3) Including one more spectacular fulfilled prophecy by the greatest Prophet of all.