

Amos 1:9-10

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/amos/amos-1/amos-19-10/>

The LORD pronounces judgment on the inhabitants of Tyre because they deported an entire population of Israel to Edom and violated the covenant of brotherhood.

The third city that would suffer the wrath of the LORD was *Tyre*, a city located on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel (modern-day Lebanon). Like Damascus and Gaza, *Tyre* is used to represent the entire nation of Phoenicia. The prophet probably chose *Tyre* because it was a wealthy city in the early eighth century, allowing the Phoenicians to control most of the commercial activity in the Mediterranean.

Using Amos as His messenger, the LORD said, *For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its punishment.* The citizens of *Tyre* had committed sins that caused them to fall under God's judgment. Their specific crime listed by Amos was that *they delivered up an entire population to Edom.* Such an act was a violation of the covenant between Israel and Tyre. As the text says, they [*Tyre*] *did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.*

In the ancient Near East, treaties between neighboring kings were common. Kings would establish a mutual agreement among themselves to encourage trade and protect one another as equal partners. In the book of Kings, we see that there was an agreement between Hiram of Tyre and Solomon (1 Kgs 5:10–14). The text tells us that when Hiram heard about Solomon's plan to build a house for the LORD, he rejoiced greatly and “gave Solomon as much as he desired of the cedar and cypress timber. Solomon then gave Hiram 20,000 kors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty kors of beaten oil; thus Solomon would give Hiram year by year. The Lord gave wisdom to Solomon, just as He promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a covenant” (1 Kgs. 5:10–12).

We are not told when and how *Tyre* violated their covenant with Israel, but the prophet tells us that they did so. Such a breach of covenant made *Tyre's* sinful act of selling Israelite slaves to Edom even worse. Consequently, the LORD said He would *send fire upon the wall of Tyre*, which would *consume her citadels*. This means that the LORD would destroy the fortress of *Tyre* and eliminate its power.

This happened as God had spoken. The Assyrians attacked *Tyre* several times and compelled them to pay tributes in the eighth century BC. Tyre later surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in 573 BC and fell to Alexander the Great in 332 BC. But the city was finally destroyed about 1291 AD when the Saracens attacked and defeated it. This fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy: “They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock. She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,” declares the Lord God, and she will become spoil for the nations” (Ezekiel 26:4–5).

Biblical Text

⁹ Thus says the Lord,
“For three transgressions of Tyre and for four
I will not revoke its *punishment*,
Because they delivered up an entire population to Edom
And did not remember *the* covenant of brotherhood.
¹⁰ “So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre
And it will consume her citadels.”