

predictions which came true, sometimes centuries after the prophet had died.

Various cities among the nations surrounding Israel form an excellent test for this. One investigator has looked at a number of the major ancient cities, pairing those which are similar: the Egyptian capitals Memphis and Thebes; the major Phoenician ports Tyre and Sidon; the Philistine cities Ekron and Ashkelon; and the imperial capitals Babylon and Nineveh. He shows that there were specific predictions about each of these cities which were fulfilled. [J. Bloom "Truth via Prophecy" in Evidence for Faith]

For example, Memphis would have its idols destroyed, Thebes its masses of people (Ezk 30:13-16). In fulfillment of this, Memphis was later used by the idol-hating Muslims as a quarry for their capital city Cairo and its idols were destroyed. Thebes was reduced from a large capital city to a series of small villages.

Tyre's rubble was to be thrown into the sea, its site becoming a place for spreading fishnets, never to be rebuilt (Ezk 26:1-14). Sidon was to face war and disaster, but nothing was said about abandonment (Ezk 28:20-23). In the following centuries, Tyre shifted from the mainland to an island offshore when Nebuchadnezzar besieged it about 600 BC. Three centuries later, Alexander used the rubble of mainland Tyre to build a causeway in the sea to attack the island city. The mainland site has become a place to spread nets, and has never been a city since. Sidon, though often besieged and conquered, is still a major port.

Ashkelon was to be reduced to ruins, but later inhabited by the remnant of the Jews. Ekron was to be uprooted (Zeph 2:4-7). In fact, both were inhabited until the time of the Crusades, when both were destroyed, with Ashkelon's harbor being filled with stones so it could no longer be used. Since 1948, Israel has rebuilt the harbor of Ashkelon, which is now inhabited by Jews. The site of Ekron has not even been located with certainty, but the best candidate for it is merely farmland.

Babylon was to be deserted, without Arabs or shepherds, its stone not to be used as stone again, to be a home for wild animals (Isa 13:19-22; Jer 51:26). Nineveh was to be destroyed and left desolate, but it would be a place for grazing sheep (Zeph 2:13-15). Since then, Babylon has come to be deserted, partly by conquest, partly by a shift in the River Euphrates, leaving its site waterless. The Arabs avoid the site as haunted; the soil is too poor for grazing. The natives use the site as a source of clay bricks, but burn the stones to produce lime. Nineveh, too, was long abandoned, though recently the suburbs of Mosul have grown out to reach it. The name of its largest mound is "Quyuniq" which means "many sheep."