

A Trek Through Isaiah 19 - 23:1-18

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Oracle against Tyre 23:1-18

	One-world Government	Davidic Monarchy	Collective Security and Self-sufficiency	The People of God	Triumphant End
2	21:1-10 Oracle of the wilderness of the sea	21:11-12 Oracle of silence	21:13-17 Oracle of Arabia	22:1-25 Oracle of the valley of vision	23:1-18 Oracle of Tyre

- Fifth oracle in the second series.
- Isaiah's question: Where is true security? Answer: One people, one world, one God.
- Tyre, who once corrupted God's people, will provide for them in a relationship of holiness.

Structure

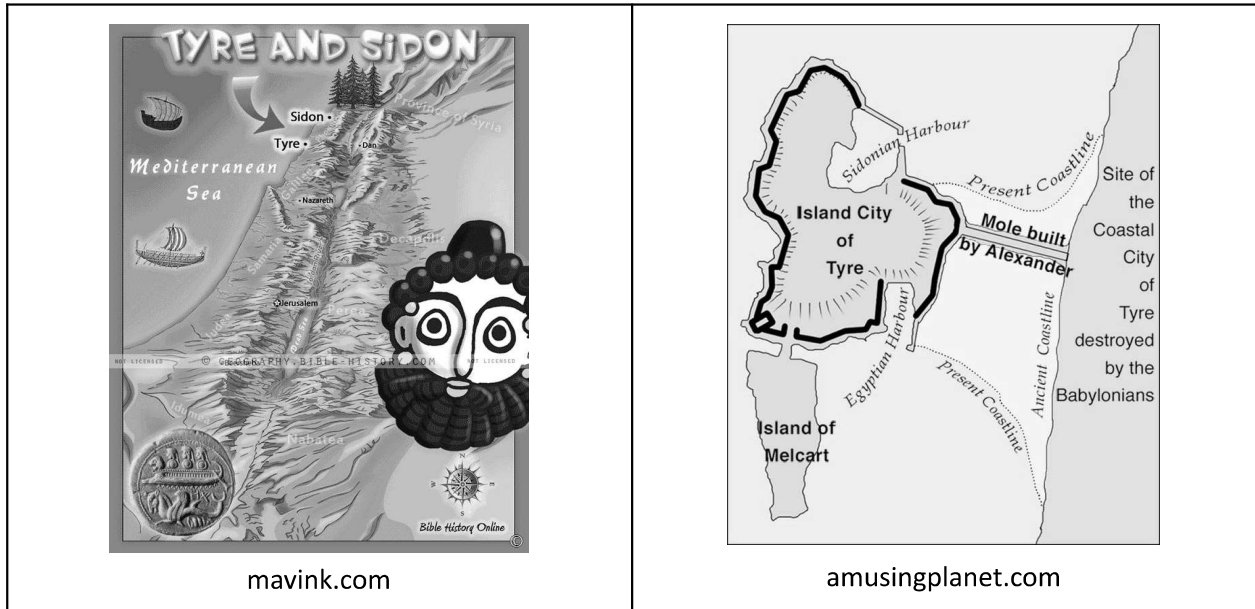
- 23:1-14 The fall of Tyre
- 23:15-18 The renewal of Tyre

The fall of Tyre 23:1-14

The City Tyre 23:1a

The oracle concerning Tyre.

- Phoenician city-state on the Mediterranean coast between Sidon and Acre.
- Listed in Asher's inheritance from Joshua as a fortified city. (Jos 19:29) Never conquered by the Israelites.
- Center of commerce
 - Strategic location: Mediterranean to the west; Mesopotamia and Arabia to the east.
 - Island stronghold with secure harbors.



- Phoenician traders went to Tarshish (Spain). In 850 BC established the colony of Carthage in north Africa
- Tyre was a strong commercial ally with the Davidic and Solomonic monarchies. King Hiram loved David and continued his covenant relationship with Solomon. (1 Ki 5) He provided building materials for the temple.
- Israel's worship of Yahweh was continually corrupted by Tyrian Baalism. Solomon was corrupted by his Phoenician wives (1 Ki 11:1-5). Jezebel, who was the daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre, attempted to introduce Baal worship in the northern kingdom (1 Ki 16-18).
- During the later kingdom period, Tyre was a center of commerce, religious idolatry, and sexual immorality. They had become an enemy of Israel and Judah (Amos 1:9-10) and traded in Hebrew slaves (Joel 3:4-6).
- Tyre was known for its pride, based on its great wealth and strategic location. As Ez 28:2 ...your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,'
- The prophets are consistently hostile to Tyre. However, here Isaiah uses Tyre as an example of the world-wide redemption to come.

Destruction reported 23:1b

Isaiah 23:1 (LSB)

1...Wail, O ships of Tarshish, For Tyre is destroyed, without house or harbor; It is revealed to them from the land of Cyprus.

- Ships of Tarshish
 - Tarshish was a mining area in Spain.
 - Ships of Tarshish were vessels capable of the longest voyages.
 - Symbolizes the maritime commerce on which Tyre depended.
- Wail
 - Because their livelihood is destroyed.
- Tyre is destroyed, without house or harbor
 - The center of commerce is gone.
 - Both city and port are destroyed.
- It is revealed to them from the land of Cyprus
 - The fleet is off Cyprus when they get the news.

Local mourning 23:2-3

Isaiah 23:2–3 (LSB)

2Be silent, you inhabitants of the coastland, You merchants of Sidon; Your messengers crossed the sea
3And were on many waters. The grain of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile was her revenue; And she was the nations' gain.

- V2 Be silent.
 - Imperative. Be silent in mourning.
- V3 Contrast with the bustle that used to be
 - Your messengers crossed the sea
 - She was the nations' gain

International mourning 23:4-5

Isaiah 23:4–5 (LSB)

4Be ashamed, O Sidon; For the sea speaks, the strong defense of the sea, saying, "I have neither travailed nor given birth; I have neither brought up choice men nor reared virgins."

5When the report reaches Egypt, They will be in travail at the report of Tyre.

- Be ashamed
 - Imperative
 - Of their blindness: they had once been friends with Yahweh's people and had known of Him, but did not take Him as their God.
- O Sidon
 - On the coast north of Tyre.
 - As the leading city of Tyre goes, so goes the surrounding country
- the sea speaks, the strong defense of the sea.
 - Sea personified. May refer to the Canaanite god of the sea.
- I have neither travailed nor given birth; I have neither brought up choice men nor reared virgins.
 - Metaphor of children to refer to Tyrian sailors and merchants who were gone.
 - Cry of a parent whose children have been killed
- Egypt...in travail
 - Two reasons
 - Tyrian merchants managed the trade of her grain.
 - With Tyre gone, Egypt was now exposed to Assyrian aggression.

Mourning all over the world 23:6-7

Isaiah 23:6-7 (LSB)

6 Pass over to Tarshish; Wail, O inhabitants of the coastland.

7 Is this your exultant city, Whose origin is from days of old, Whose feet used to lead her to sojourn in distant places?

- V6
 - Pass over to Tarshish
 - Word spreads around the Mediterranean
 - Wail, O inhabitants of the coastland
 - Who all depended on Tyrian commerce
- V7
 - Is this your exultant city ?
 - Amazement: could this have happened to Tyre?
 - Contrast with her former glory
 - Exultant
 - Origin from days of old
 - used to lead her to sojourn in distant places. Imperfect: continually active in the past to colonize.

The cause of the destruction 23:8-9

Isaiah 23:8–9 (LSB)

8Who has counseled this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, Whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth?

9Yahweh of hosts has counseled it, to defile the pride of all beauty, To make contemptuous all the honored of the earth.

- V8 Who has counseled this?
 - Rhetorical question. Answer in v9.
- V8 Description of Tyre's glory
 - bestower of crowns. Controlled kingdoms.
 - whose merchants were princes. Treated as royalty.
 - whose traders were the honored of the earth. Because of their commercial empire.
- V9 Description of Tyre's pride
 - the pride of all beauty. Their wealth and power resulted in pride.
 - The honored of the earth. Rather than Yahweh.
- V9 Coming judgment
 - Yahweh of hosts has counseled it. Certain.
 - to defile the pride of all beauty, To make contemptuous all the honored of the earth
 - Parallel w v8: the honored of the earth.
 - The pride of man will be brought down.
 - As Is 48:11 ...My glory I will not give to another.
 - Why?
 - Man's pride is false: it denies God's glory and his own sin.
 - Man's pride prevents him from achieving his true glory in Christ.

Breakup of the commercial empire 23:10

Isaiah 23:10 (LSB)

10Overflow your land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish; There is no more restraint.

- Daughter of Tarshish. Cities dependent on Tyrian trade.
- no restraint anymore. Tyrian dominance removed. Picture is of the river Nile in flood flowing unhindered across the land of Egypt.

The destroyer called. 23:11

Isaiah 23:11 (LSB)

11He has stretched His hand out over the sea; He has made the kingdoms tremble; Yahweh has given a command concerning Canaan to demolish its strong defenses.

- He has stretched his hand out over the sea.
 - Referring to Tyre's maritime commerce.
 - Yahweh is the Lord of the sea.
- he has made the kingdoms tremble.
 - City-states of the Phoenicians. Most prominent were Tyre and Sidon.
- Yahweh has given a command concerning Canaan to demolish its strong defenses.
 - Given a command. Calling the nations.
 - Concerning Canaan. Land of the Phoenicians.
 - To demolish its strong defenses. Tyre attacked multiple times.
 - By Assyria: Tiglath-Pileser in 738 BC, Shalmaneser V in 726-722 BC, Sennacherib in 701 BC.
 - By Babylon: Besieged by Nebuchadnezzar for 13y in 586-573 BC.
 - By Greece: Fell to Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

Proud people displaced 23:12-13

Isaiah 23:12–13 (LSB)

12So He said, “You shall exult no more, O crushed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise, pass over to Cyprus; even there you will find no rest.”

13Behold, the land of the Chaldeans—this is the people which was not; Assyria established it for desert creatures—they erected their siege towers, they stripped its palaces, they made it a ruin.

- V12

- So He said.
 - Resuming the description of Tyre’s judgment
- crushed virgin daughter of Sidon.
 - Tyre was a colony of Sidon, a city 20 mi north on the coast.
 - Virgin: Never taken.
 - Picture of a young virgin assaulted violently.
- Arise, pass over
 - Imperative to flee.
- even there you will have no rest..
 - Other lands would be reluctant to offer asylum and risk the wrath of the Assyrians.

- V13

- Behold the land of the Chaldeans!
 - Urging the Tyrians to look to the example of the devastations of Babylon by Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon II.

Summary 23:14

Isaiah 23:14 (LSB)

14Wail, O ships of Tarshish, For your strong defense is destroyed.

- Wail, O ships of Tarshish
 - Inclusio with v1
- Ships of Tarshish.
 - Represent trade between the nations.
- Strong defense.
 - Stronghold of Mediterranean finance and commerce.

The renewal of Tyre 23:15-18

Interim restoration 23:15-17

Isaiah 23:15–17 (LSB)

15 Now it will be in that day, that Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

16 Take your harp, walk about the city, O forgotten harlot; Pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, That you may be remembered.

17 And it will be at the end of seventy years that Yahweh will visit Tyre. Then she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.

- V15
 - forgotten for seventy years.
 - May refer to the destruction of Tyre's commerce by Assyria. In 701 BC the Assyrian Sennacherib devastated the mainland and did vast damage to Tyre's trade. Not until Assyrian power waned around 630 BC did Tyre's commerce revive.
 - May refer to the seventy years of Judah's captivity, which was a serious blow to Tyre's economy. When the exiles returned, the trade relationship was renewed. Cedar for the rebuilding of the temple was supplied from Tyre and Sidon (Ez3:7).
 - May be an idiom for completeness: Tyre's times are in Yahweh's hands.
 - Like the days of one king.
 - Maybe "without change".
 - Song of the harlot
 - Title of the song in v16
- V16
 - Take your harp...O forgotten harlot
 - Tragic picture of an old prostitute, once beautiful, now forgotten, singing to rebuild her clientele.
- V17
 - Yahweh will visit Tyre
 - To restore her
 - she will go back to her harlot's wages and will play the harlot...
 - Returns to her former practices.
 - No change of heart.

Final renewal 23:18

Isaiah 23:18 (LSB)

18And her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to Yahweh; it will not be treasured up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who inhabit the presence of Yahweh.

- And her gain and her harlot's wages
 - Tyre's commercial practices
- will be set apart to Yahweh
 - Same word as on the turban of the high priest in Ex 28:36
 - Same commerce but a new purpose
- not be treasured up or hoarded.
 - No longer for herself
- her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who inhabit the presence of Yahweh.
 - Given in service to Yahweh.
- As Ps 87:4 "I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me; Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.'"
 - Knowing God
 - Reborn as His people

Application

Look at Isaiah 23:7–9, 18 (LSB)

7Is this your exultant city, Whose origin is from days of old, Whose feet used to lead her to sojourn in distant places?

8Who has counseled this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, Whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth?

9Yahweh of hosts has counseled it, to defile the pride of all beauty, To make contemptuous all the honored of the earth.

18And her gain and her harlot's wages will be set apart to Yahweh; it will not be treasured up or hoarded, but her gain will become sufficient food and choice attire for those who inhabit the presence of Yahweh.

The Tyrians were successful merchants but they were judged. Is success bad? No

What was wrong?

- Exalting themselves
- Seeing their success as from themselves rather than from Yahweh.
- As Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4:30 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal house by the strength of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'
 - All about me

What was the result?

- V9 Their beauty defiled, their honor made contemptuous.

Can success be honoring to the Lord? Yes.

- V18 Tyre's commerce will become holy, provide for God's people

How?

- Ps 107:23, 31-32 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on many waters...Let them give thanks to Yahweh for His lovingkindness, And for His wondrous deeds to the sons of men! Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, And praise Him at the seat of the elders.
 - Thanks, exaltation, praise for Yahweh
- Ja 4:13-16 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.
 - All enterprises and life itself are in the hands of the Lord.
 - Not acknowledging Him is boasting in arrogance and is evil.
- Pr 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, But Yahweh directs his steps.
 - Know that success is due to the Lord
- Ecc 3:13-14 ...every man who eats and drinks and sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God....God has so worked that men should fear Him.
 - Fear God
- 1 Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
 - All to the glory of God
- Praying for NLG

References

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