

# The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

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Text

Isaiah 23:1-18

Topic

The city of Tyre comes under God's judgment, not once, but several times.

Title

***"Goodness, Gracious, the Great Falls of Tyre"***

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**Emperor Palpatine is the embodiment of the "man behind the man."**

His influence extended far beyond what the public and even the Jedi initially perceived. Through careful planning, manipulation, and a deep understanding of the Force, he orchestrated his rise to power, ultimately becoming the tyrannical ruler of the galaxy.

Another example of the "man behind the man," a comedic one, would be *the Wizard of Oz*. "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

We can't fully appreciate what Isaiah has to say about the city of Tyre unless we acknowledge the "man behind the man."

**Except, in this case, the "man" wasn't a man; It was Satan.**

- The prophet Ezekiel describes "the **prince** of Tyre," saying things like, "you say, 'I *am* a god, I sit *in* the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,' Yet you *are* a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god," and "But you *shall be*

a man, and not a god, In the hand of him who slays you" (28:2&9). Historians tell us this was Ithobaal III of Tyre.

- Then Ezekiel describes "the **king** of Tyre," saying things like, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God... You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you" (28:12-15).

It seems Satan lived in Tyre for a while. He apparently moved after the fall of Tyre because we are told in the Revelation he had his throne in the city of Pergamos.

Commentator Andrew Davis writes, "Isaiah speaks an oracle against the wealthy, powerful trading city of Tyre, a symbol for the worldly lust for material things that still dominates our world."

**Our own "worldly lust for material things" will be under the proverbial microscope.**

I will organize my comments around two points: **#1 The Wealth Satan Offers You A Harlot**, and **#2 The Wealth Jesus Gives You Is Holiness**.

### **#1 - The Wealth Satan Offers You Is A Harlot (v1-17)**

Satan is the devil behind the man in the city of Tyre. Though he is not named, he was the King of Tyre.

In verse one and in verse fourteen Isaiah repeats the phrase, "Wail, you ships of Tarshish." That bracketing alerts us the first fourteen verses are about a single event, a particular fall of Tyre.

The city was conquered by Assyria, Babylon, and Greece under Alexander the Great. Others, too. Which fall are we looking at?

Tyre will recover "after seventy years" and then fall again. When Babylon conquered Jerusalem, the prophet Jeremiah indicated the captivity would last "seventy years." They conquered Tyre at approximately the same time they conquered Jerusalem. Seventy years later, Babylon would fall to the Medo-Persian Empire.

King Cyrus would issue a decree that the Jews were free to return to Jerusalem. It makes sense that other conquered peoples would also be released. Thus we are to understand that in these fourteen verses, we see Tyre's fall to Babylon.

Isa 23:1 The burden against Tyre. Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For it is laid waste, So that there is no house, no harbor; From the land of Cyprus it is revealed to them. Not sure how "the ships of Tarshish" received news of world events. Could be they encountered ships from Tyre as they were on their way there.

News now is instantaneous. We can watch, on our phones, live events anywhere on Earth. It is a fulfillment of prophecy. In the Revelation, we read about the two witnesses of God, who travel the globe during the first 3½ years of the Time of Jacob's Trouble. They are eventually killed by the antichrist, but as their dead bodies lay in the city of Jerusalem, life returns to them, they ascend to Heaven, while the entire Earth watches.

We've seen the potential to spread disinformation and misinformation. With the ability to produce deep fakes that are impossible to debunk, soon we won't be able to trust any news.

Satan is a liar. What stronger lies than to create your own truth? Mass amounts of people can be mobilized by the technologies of today. It's a liars paradise.

Isa 23:2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland, You merchants of Sidon, Whom those who cross the sea have filled.

Commerce came to a sudden "be still-ness." COVID19 gave us a taste of that, as cargo ships backed-up in harbors waiting to be 'approved' for entry. It spread fear as shelves were laid bare, stocking up on goods. It was a dramatic example of worrying about tomorrow, which is a lack of trust in the Lord.

Isa 23:3 And on great waters the grain of Shihor, The harvest of the River [the Nile], is her revenue; And she is a marketplace for the nations.

Egypt depended upon Tyre to carry her harvests. In general, it's not a good idea to have a dependence on only one source. Too volatile. Satan loves it because it leads to compromise of values. You end up doing business with shady characters.

Isa 23:4 Be ashamed, O Sidon; For the sea has spoken, The strength of the sea, saying, "I do not labor, nor bring forth children; Neither do I rear young men, Nor bring up virgins."

Albert Barnes wrote,

*The sense is, "My wealth and resources are gone. My commerce is annihilated. I cease to plant cities and colonies, and to nourish and foster them, as I once did, by my trade." The idea of the whole verse is, that the city which had been the mistress of the commercial world, and distinguished for founding other cities and colonies, was about to lose her importance, and to cease to extend her colonies and her influence over other countries. Over this fact, Sidon, the mother and founder of Tyre herself, would be humbled and grieved that her daughter, so proud, so rich, and so magnificent, was brought so low.*

Tyre was called, "the strength of the sea," on account of its situation. Tyre was on the coast, but farther out, they also occupied an island fortress. Think Alcatraz & San Francisco. Her situation made it seemingly impossible to conquer them. Assyria, then Babylon would conquer the coastal city, but the island was untouched.

Isa 23:5 When the report *reaches* Egypt, They also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.

Isa 23:6 Cross over to Tarshish; Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!

Isa 23:7 *Is this your joyous city, Whose antiquity is from ancient days, Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?*

They had a proud heritage, and a long history. Then, suddenly, it was too late to repent.

No Gentile nation can look back at its heritage, no matter how godly, and think God will overlook their ongoing, unrepentant sin.

It was the custom of those days to chain together captives and lead them naked on foot to the land of their captors.

Isa 23:8 Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city*, Whose merchants are princes, Whose traders are the honorable of the earth?

Tyre was admired by the nations of Earth. They were treated like royalty, wined & dined. Who counseled Babylon to destroy the coastal city?

Isa 23:9 The LORD of hosts has purposed it, To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory, To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

The destruction of Tyre traceable to the LORD. It was His doing. He 'owns' it, as we say.

God chooses Gentile nations to carry out His will on Earth. Instead of remaining humble, pointing to God and away from themselves, they say, "Look what we have built."

Success, being blessed, prosperity is a much greater threat to you than buffeting and bankruptcy.

The merchant activity swelled them with "the pride of all glory."

Ezekiel tells us this about Satan: "Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (28:17). Satan wanted to be like God. We would say that pride seeks glory; they go hand-in-hand

We want credit; we want recognition. Decreasing so that Jesus can increase goes against our pride. Satan exploits that. He may not offer us all the kingdoms of the world as he did Jesus. But he has a way of appealing to us right where it's sin.

Isa 23:10 Overflow through your land like the River, O daughter of Tarshish; *There is* no more strength.

I'm sure you've been following the rising of Tulare Lake. Keep that situation in prayer. If levees and barriers prove insufficient, water is going to flow.

Once the last defenses were breached, the inhabitants of coastal Tyre would pour forth from their city like an overflowing lake.

Those who survived would take refuge in Tarshish. The city would have "no strength," meaning it was conquered.

Isa 23:11 He stretched out His hand over the sea, He shook the kingdoms; The LORD has given a commandment against Canaan To destroy its strongholds.

This mention of God's hand reminded me of a *Star Trek* original series episode. A huge energy field in the shape of a glowing green hand appears and grabs the

Enterprise. The "hand of God" is a metaphor that suggests omnipotence controlled by compassion as God sovereignly provides for His plans to move forward.

Isaiah's mention of "Canaan" refers to Judah, Jerusalem in particular.

Isa 23:12 And He said, "You will rejoice no more, O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise, cross over to Cyprus; There also you will have no rest."

This is a bitter analogy. The citizens of Tyre would be like a young virgin who had been assaulted. Many would seek safety in Cyprus, but they would "have no rest."

There are, at minimum, over one hundred million refugees in the world today. Another thirty million abductees are being trafficked. It is just the kind of suffering Satan loves to inflict on God's creation.

Isa 23:13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans, This people *which* was not; Assyria founded it for wild beasts of the desert. They set up its towers, They raised up its palaces, *And* brought it to ruin.

The names "Babylon" and "Chaldea" are often interchanged. The Chaldeans were the populace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Didn't Assyria come *before* Babylon as a world power, and get conquered by Babylon? Yes, but not before Assyria had ruled over the Chaldeans for a time. We need to be reminded that Isaiah was writing 150 years before Babylon was the world power. At the time, Assyria was dominant over Babylon. The fact that Babylon was not powerful at the time Isaiah spoke made the prophecy all the more remarkable.

God is not arbitrary. He doesn't 'use' nations only to discard them once they are no longer needed. He, in fact, wants them to walk in His righteousness. "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it" (Jeremiah 18:7-10).

Isa 23:14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For your strength is laid waste.

Some of their merchant ships must have been in the harbor of Tyre. They were destroyed alongside those of Tyre. Collateral damage.

You might be familiar with the line, "You ride with outlaws, you die with outlaws." Think about your 'posse' so you don't get caught in some crossfire or stand-off.

Isa 23:15 At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as *in* the song of the harlot:

Isa 23:16 "Take a harp, go about the city, You forgotten harlot; Make sweet melody, sing many songs, That you may be remembered."

Isa 23:17 And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.

Tyre would have seventy years to contemplate the pride that had caused her downfall, and to repent. She would, however, immediately return to all the trappings of her former life, prostituting herself for possessions and power. She would fall harder.

We mentioned Alexander the Great. He figured it out. High on speed, he would raze the coastal city, then use its debris to build a causeway to the island. Tyre's 30,000 inhabitants were either massacred or sold into slavery.

Tyre would remove their treasures and valuables to the island during a siege of the coastal town. Their wealth was secure... Until it wasn't.

Financial security is an illusion. I'm not saying it happens to everyone, but Satan loves to get you engrossed in your earthly future, then rob your money. If things go the way, they currently are, one morning we are going to wake up to find that the government has seized all of our assets. It's all part of what the Bible says will happen in the future.

**W**arning signage is important. I've discovered an Instagram account named OSHA Is it safe? It shows folks doing all manner of unsafe things. The signs may say Flammable, or High Voltage, but workers ignore them, cutting corners, at their own peril.

**Everything about our world should bear the warning, *Touched by a Fallen Angel.***

Since the devil is described as a murderer, a liar, and a thief, it should occur to you that he is constantly attempting to rob you, to lie to you, and to kill you. Or, like we sometimes say, to do something worse that kill you.

We are commanded and encouraged and empowered to, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We resist him by holding our ground wearing the armor of God. If he seems to be gaining ground on you, check your armor. Maybe you forgot to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and preferred some carnal method... Or you left your breastplate of righteousness at home so you could dabble with sin.

## **#2 - The Wealth Jesus Gives You Is Holiness (v18)**

Are you thinking what I'm thinking? That we need to read Psalm 45:12. "And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor."

Tyre is invited to a king's royal wedding and brings a gift. The way Psalm 45 is quoted in the New Testament reveals it as a type.

### **The King is a type of Jesus, the bride is His Church.**

I should pause to give a quick overview of the future as presented in the Bible:

- Jesus is coming to resurrect the dead believers of this Church Age. Those of us who are alive when he comes will be raptured, immediately transformed into our eternal bodies. We accompany Jesus, to Heaven, to the place He has prepared for us.
- At some point after the resurrection, the world leader we call the antichrist will sign a peace pact with Israel. It marks the official start of the Great Tribulation. We prefer to call those seven years, the Time of Jacob's Trouble. That is the name Jeremiah gave it to emphasize its purpose, to bring all Israel to salvation.
- At the end of the seven years, the Lord Jesus returns to defeat the armies of Earth gathered in Megiddo for the Battle of Armageddon. We come with Him.
- The Lord establishes the Kingdom of God on Earth promised to Israel. A one-thousand year kingdom of peace and prosperity ensues.



- Today, we are betrothed to Jesus; it is our engagement. After the rapture, we will be wed to Him. At His Second Coming, we will feast on Earth with Him.

Psalm 45 is a Jesus-is-coming psalm. It describes the majestic beauty and righteousness of the King and His eternal kingdom. The psalm celebrates the King's marriage to a beautiful bride, representing the union between Christ and His Church. It also foretells the King's victorious rule over His enemies, bringing judgment and establishing His kingdom on Earth, the future Millennium. The psalm exudes hope, praise, and anticipation for the triumphant reign of Jesus in the age to come.

**Tyre is mentioned, "And the daughter of Tyre *will come with a gift*; The rich among the people will seek your favor." (v12)**

Tyre will be a Millennial nation.

With that fuller understanding, we read Isaiah 23:18, "Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing."

**I think this is about the human subjects of Tyre in the Millennium.**

They will serve as *caterers* and *tailors* for the human subjects of the future Kingdom on Earth.

Let's key in on, "Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up..." No one will need a savings account, or investments, or pensions. Their labor will be its own reward. They will bask in the joy of serving others.

That can't happen in our current dispensation. It can't happen until Jesus is ruling, and Satan is confined. Today he is the ruler of this world. In the future Millennium, the devil will be bound and incarcerated.

There are things we can do now that embrace the spirit of future Tyre:

We can seek first the Kingdom of God... Not worry about tomorrow... Store up treasures in Heaven... Live to earn eternal rewards at the Judgment Seat of Jesus... Always build for God using the very best spiritual materials... See ourselves as stewards in God's household on Earth... Give to God's work regularly, sacrificially, and cheerfully... Etc., etc.

The NKJV says "set apart," but most versions say, "will be holy." Set apart is the definition of "holy." True wealth is to belong to the Lord, set apart for Him and therefore holy, enjoying all spiritual blessings.

The final phrase is, "... for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing." The word "gain," according to Strong's Concordance, means "profit from merchandise." Tyre, once rich from trade and commerce, will find true profit & wealth in giving everything to others. The "gain of giving" I guess we could call it.

I'll close with quotes about this kind of giving from five saints:

- Cory Ten Boom said, "The measure of a life, after all, is not its *duration*, but its *donation*."
- Henry Drummond said, "The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving."
- Adrian Rogers: "It's what you sow that multiplies, not what you keep in the barn."
- Randy Alcorn: "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving."
- George Mueller: "God judges what we give by what we keep."

Here is a bonus quote from Tim Keller, who went home to be with the Lord this past week:

*"The human heart is an idol factory that takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions, even family, and turns them into ultimate things. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives, because, we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment, if we attain them."*