

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 23:1 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

Pastor Chuck Smith explores the historical and prophetic significance of Tyre's destruction in Isaiah 23, emphasizing the dangers of pride and the importance of humility before God.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, Proverbs 22:6, Isaiah 23:1, Isaiah 23:15, Matthew 6:33, John 8:12, 1 Peter 4:8

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

The video begins by discussing the importance of family and the breakdown of the family unit in society. It introduces Pastor Chuck Smith's Marriage and Family Bible Study as a resource to help families maintain love and unity. The video then transitions to a prayer, emphasizing the need to focus on eternal values and treasures in heaven. It concludes by mentioning Pastor Chuck's ongoing study through the book of Isaiah and the hope and light that comes from walking in the light of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible, taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament.

And for those of you following along in your Bibles, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 23, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Proclamation Against Tyre. One thing is needful, O my Father, One thing is needful, O my God, That I sit at your feet and pour out my love. This thing is needful, O my God.

And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. Chapter 23 opens with the words, The Burden of Tyre. Now, the prophet has been dealing with several different countries, and that judgment of God that will be coming upon these different nations as the result of the Assyrian invasion, and then as the result of the later Babylonian invasion.

And last week we saw the predictions upon Edom, the area of Edomia, and we saw the destruction that would come from Babylon upon the area of Saudi Arabia as they moved down on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Now in chapter 23, we have the prophecies of the destruction of this city of Tyre. Tyre was the chief city of the Phoenicians.

And from your history books, you remember Phoenicia and how that the Phoenician navy ruled the Mediterranean for so many years. They were the merchants. They had the greatest navy of the ancient world.

And they plied the Mediterranean Sea, the entire area, taking the grain of Egypt to the areas of Greece and Rome. And they were just merchantmen, traders. And they actually had a colony set up as far away as Spain, and thus they sort of ruled the Mediterranean as far as merchandising, and thus they were an extremely wealthy city.

The city of Tyre is a very ancient city, one of the most ancient cities of the world. The claim concerning Herodotus, when he visited Tyre in 431, they said that the temple that was there was built some 2,000 years earlier. That's questionable and challenged, but we do know that the city of Tyre did exist at the time that Joshua came into the land, leading the children of Israel in the conquest of the promised land.

During the time of David, Hiram, who was the king of Tyre at that time, had a great liking for David. He was an admirer of David. And later on, as Solomon built the temple, Hiram provided many of the skilled men to cut the trees of the forest of Lebanon and bring the cedars down to Joppa, where they were brought then overland to Jerusalem, where they were used in the building of so many of the great buildings there in Jerusalem, but especially the temple at the time of Solomon.

Tyre, a very wealthy city, ultimately became a very proud city. They had built walls around the city of Tyre that made it a strong, powerful city. The walls went right out into the harbor, into the Mediterranean.

And so when they closed the gates of Tyre, the only access into the city was by the sea. And because the Phoenician navy ruled the seas, though they attempted at times to conquer Tyre by the sea, it was never successful. And thus, because they had the channel open to the sea, they could withstand long sieges because they could just resupply the city from the sea.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar finally conquered Tyre, but it was after a 12-year siege. It took that long, but the people of Tyre got tired of the siege of Nebuchadnezzar. And so they began to build a city on a island that was a mile offshore.

And so finally, rather than really being conquered, they just moved everything offshore to this island and to the new city of Tyre, so that by the time Nebuchadnezzar came in and conquered it, the city was empty and all of the goods and the wealth was already transferred out to the new city out there on the island. And so though he had this long siege, it was an empty victory because there were no spoils when he finally took the city, the wealth and all had been moved out to this island. Tyre continued to exist then as a new city on this island about a mile offshore.

When Alexander the Great began his conquering, he came to the area of Tyre. He sent messages out to the city to surrender or to be captured, and they sort of scoffed at his demands. And so Alexander tried to get together a navy gathering the ships from Sidon and the neighboring areas, but he was thoroughly defeated by the navy of Tyre.

Then he struck on a new idea. The ruins of the old city that were still lying there, the rock that runs the wall and the buildings, with these rocks, he built a giant jetty or causeway from the shore on up to this island city. And then he scraped the dirt and put it on the rocks and built these scaling type of machines that he moved on this causeway out to the island.

And he actually, by building this giant causeway, was able to take the city of Tyre and did conquer it. It is one of the marvelous annals of history and one of the things that is often pointed to as the brilliant stratagems of war. And so the city then fell to Alexander the Great.

It did resist, and because of its resistance, he was very cruel and fierce in his destruction of the city of Tyre. He destroyed it so thoroughly that the city of Tyre became lost historically. In fact, there were even those who questioned the existence of Tyre because they searched for the site of Tyre and really could not find it.

One day, a group of biblical archaeologists were up there in that area, and they were watching some fishermen as they were spreading their nets on the rocks there, and they noticed that these rocks didn't seem to be natural. They began to study it and they realized that these rocks were actually set there. And suddenly the whole picture came together.

They had found the causeway that Alexander the Great had built. They thought that this was just a peninsula. They called it a peninsula, but actually they discovered it was the causeway that Alexander the Great had built up to this island city of Tyre.

And of course, it became one of those remarkable archaeological discoveries that confirmed the truth of the Bible. Now, Ezekiel, interestingly enough, in chapter 26, he wrote about a hundred years after Isaiah. Ezekiel wrote during the time of the Babylonian captivity.

But Ezekiel, interestingly enough, in chapter 26, describes the destruction of Tyre. And it is interesting that he, in describing the destruction of Tyre, uses two pronouns, and he, and he, and he. And then suddenly he changes and he said, and they, and they, and they.

And as you read the prophecies carefully, you will realize that he is prophesying of both the destruction that would take place by Nebuchadnezzar, and he will do this, and he will do that. And then he goes ahead even further into the future to the time of Alexander the Great, and he describes him taking the rocks of the city and casting them into the midst of the sea, scraping the dust of the city and casting it into the sea. And he very graphically describes exactly how Alexander the Great took the city.

It was almost as though Alexander the Great had the prophecy of Ezekiel and said, wow, this is a good idea. Why don't we do this? And it was predicted, of course, by Ezekiel in a very interesting fashion. Again, God's marvelous word of prophecy that stands.

Now here in 23, it probably is a reference to the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, because he does speak of the Chaldeans in verse 13. This people was not, but at the time that Isaiah was writing, the Babylonians were not really a powerful nation at all. They had been conquered by the Assyrians and were vassals to the Assyrians, and they were not considered a world power.

And yet he speaks of Babylon's power that shall rise. So the burden of Tyre, how ye the ships of Tarshish. Tarshish is this community that was established on the area of Spain by the people of Tyre.

For it is laid waste. There is no house, no entering in from the land of Chittim. It is revealed to them.

Now, when Tyre finally fell, of course, their navy was out continuing with the merchandising and the trading on the Mediterranean. Chittim is the area that was one of the major ports in Cyprus. And thus, in returning to Tyre, they would stop in Cyprus.

And as they are coming back, they receive the reports there in Cyprus, in Chittim, the fact that it has fallen, that the city of Tyre no longer exists, that it has been destroyed. And so the howling, there's no home to go to. As they are returning back to Tyre, there's nothing there.

It's fallen. It has been taken. So it is laid waste.

There's no house, no entering in. Be still ye inhabitants of the coast, thou whom the merchants of Sidon that pass over the sea have replenished. And so the coastlands of Phoenicia, including Sidon, a wealthy area because of the merchandising over the entire Mediterranean.

And by the great waters, the seed of Syhor. Syhor is the river Nile and the Nile Delta, that very fertile area where so much grain was grown. Now, the ships of Phoenicia or Tyre would take the grain from Egypt.

And they would, of course, buy it in Egypt and sell it around the Mediterranean. And Egypt supplied much of the food for the people of the Mediterranean. And so he is talking about the problems in Egypt as the result of the destruction of Tyre and thus the demise of the Phoenician Navy.

And by the great waters, the seed of Syhor, the harvest of the river, river Nile is her revenue. And she is the Mart of the nation or the marketplace for the Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, the sister city of Tyre, for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins. And so the wasted of the city, no more children, no more young men, virgins, no more marrying and so forth.

As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. So pass ye over to Tarshish, how ye inhabitants of the coast. It was a blow to all of the coastal cities of the Mediterranean when this great merchant navy was actually destroyed because of this mother city being destroyed.

Is this your joyous city whose antiquity is of ancient days? As we mentioned, Tyre is one of the ancient cities of the world. Her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this council against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes and whose traffickers are the honorable men of the earth? He asked the question, who has taken this council to destroy her? And he answers in verse nine, the Lord of hosts has purposed it.

So the destruction actually comes from the Lord to stain the pride of all glory and to bring in contempt all of the honorable of the earth. The Bible tells us that pride cometh before destruction, a haughty spirit before the fall. The Bible tells us that there are six things that God hates, ye seven are an abomination unto him.

And one thing that is abominable to God is the pride of man, the pride of people being lifted up with pride. And God hates that. And God has set himself against the proud.

Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord, the scripture says, and he will lift you up. But the proud, he said, he will abase. And so because of the pride of these people, because they were trusting in their own strength, in their own wisdom, in their own power, the Lord allowed them to be brought down.

Pride is a dangerous thing for an individual. It is a dangerous thing for a nation. And so because of that pride, God will bring them into contempt.

Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish. There is no more strength. He stretched out his hand over the sea.

He shook the kingdoms. The Lord has given a commandment against the merchant city to destroy the strongholds thereof. And so it's as though the Lord commanded the Babylonians to come and to destroy this city.

And he said, thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise and pass over to Chittim. And many of the people did escape and move to Cyprus when Tyre fell.

But there also you will have no rest. And in some of the earlier sieges under Shalmaneser, when they fled to Cyprus, he pursued them there. They would have no rest.

Behold the land of the Chaldeans, the Babylonians. This people was not at the time that Isaiah wrote, they weren't really powerful at all till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness. They set up the towers thereof.

They raised up the palaces thereof and he brought it to ruin. So he's talking about the Chaldeans or the Babylonians bringing it to ruin. How these ships of Tarshish for your strength is laid waste.

It shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten for 70 years, according to the days of one King. And after the end of 70 years shall Tyre sing as a harlot. Now, 70 years is often used in the Bible as an indeterminate type of a number.

And it's a figurative kind of a number that just speaks of an indeterminate number. You remember when Peter feeling that he was really growing in grace, getting the message of forgiveness, beginning to understand how important it is to have a forgiving spirit, thinking that he was maybe stretching it a bit, but impressing the other disciples, no doubt said, Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother for the same offense seven times? And I'm sure Peter thought he was stretching it, but it would impress the other guys. You know, Peter actually thinks he can forgive a guy seven times for the same thing.

Man, that guy's really growing in grace. And the Lord turned to him and said, no, Peter, 70 times seven, the 70 being an indeterminate number. The Lord isn't saying 490 times and then wait on him.

You know what the Lord is indicating is that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. It's a matter of spirit. And we are to have a forgiving spirit, but 70 is often used in the scriptures as an indeterminate period of time.

So there is really nothing historically that would help us to understand this 70 years that the prophet is talking about. Face to face, Lord, let me know. Face to face, Lord, let me see you.

Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments, but first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C-3252. Again, that's tape or CD number C-3252.

Well, as the holiday season is approaching, we'd like to bring to your attention a very helpful resource for families, knowing it's the time of year when families gather together. Undoubtedly, one of the most glaring signs that our society is in trouble is the breakdown of the family unit. Marriages just aren't making it today and kids are suffering as they watch the breakup of their homes.

The word for today would like to present Pastor Chuck Smith's Marriage and Family Bible Study. In this series, Pastor Chuck discusses basic principles designed to keep your family's love alive. Each member of

the family has a different set of needs and responsibilities.

And when you know and apply God's principles, everyone in your family can experience real peace, real joy, and unconditional love. And when you call and order Pastor Chuck's Marriage and Family Series, the word for today would like to bless you with a resource entitled Christian Family Relationships, taken from the books of Ephesians and Colossians. This study reveals the secret to a solid and biblically based Christian family relationship.

And right now you can get it for free when you order the Marriage and Family Series. And remember, the word for today would like to assist you this Christmas in spreading the gospel of Jesus to your family, friends, and co-workers. Please call our customer service department to help you in finding that perfect gift that will reflect the true meaning of Christmas.

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And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you would like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well, coming up next time on the Word for Today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the Word for Today. And now with a few closing comments, here is Pastor Chuck.

So again, dark days, oh yes, but there's light on the other side. The Lord always brings you into the hope of the light, never leaves you in the darkness. Only the world does that.

Looking at the world today, it's dark and I don't see any light for the world or in the world apart from Jesus Christ, the glorious light of the world. May we walk in his light. Father, we thank you again tonight that you have given to us the score whereby we can follow the events and we can see where they end.

And Lord, we pray that we might, oh God, put our lives and our values in things that are eternal. May we not be caught up, Lord, in this temporal world that is going to perish, but may we, Lord, invest and lay up our treasures in heaven, eternal treasures with you. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. By the word for today, the radio ministry of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California.

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