

# God Reigns

Sept. 27, 2020

Isaiah 23:8-18

One of the most important themes of the Bible is God's sovereignty over human history. In today's text, Isaiah asserts God's power over history, even over the most powerful and seemingly untouchable nations.

Our Bible passage is a prophecy of judgment against the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre was a fortified island city in the Mediterranean Sea. The city served as a center of maritime trade and was quite wealthy as a result. Sidon was on the mainland coast of the Mediterranean and was another very wealthy center of maritime trade. Isaiah's prophecy of judgment against these cities occurs at the end of an extended series of oracles against various foreign nations, including Babylon and Egypt (chapters 13-23).

In an unprecedented year of challenges for our nation, for our communities, schools, businesses, churches and our families, it gives believers comfort to know that our great and mighty God is in control. He is on His throne and He still oversees the affairs of man.

It is God that has blessed and sustained us as a nation. One cannot help but think that just as Isaiah prophesied God's judgment on Tyre because they had become very wealthy and prideful, we too need to beware of turning our backs on the Lord and thinking we don't need Him.

God's Word provides a timely reminder to us all. In all of the turmoil we are witnessing in our nation, let us remember that our God reigns. As God's people, let us humble ourselves, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways. *[excerpts from Joshua Sharp and Glenn Metts]*

## God Is Just (Isaiah 23:8-10) [Background Isaiah 13-23]

- At the end of a series of oracles, Isaiah shares God's judgment of Tyre and Sidon.
    - Tyre was a major Phoenician center of trade. Very wealthy and influential.
    - Tyre and Sidon were also known for their worship of the god Baal.
  - Tyre was considered impenetrable. It was difficult for the people of Judah to believe Isaiah.
    - Think of the effect of 9/11 had on the world. The world markets crashed.
      - The impact would be like all of New York city falling today.
  - ***"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre?"*** Only God could.
    - World history happens under God's control and plan.
  - ***"The Lord of hosts hath purposed it."*** God is in control.
    - Tyre would be punished for their failure to recognize God as the true source of their wealth and power. PRIDE leads to judgment.
  - Oracles reminded Judah (and us) not to trust in the values of other nations – power, wealth, worldly wisdom, etc.
    - Only the Lord is trustworthy. Only He will bring about justice.
- **Do you put your trust in human structures and institutions?**
- **What does this passage tell us about trusting man made things?**

**sovereign** – the supreme ruler possessing ultimate power



### **God Is Active**(Isaiah 23:11-14)

- God is not passive. He didn't create the world, wind it up and let it go. He is active in world events.
- ***"He stretched out His hand over the sea"***
  - God's power is supreme. He is in total control.
- The Phoenicians of Tyre were among the finest sailors.
  - They maintained control of much of the shipping traffic from Egypt, Cyprus and even as far as Spain (Tarshish),
- ***"The Lord hath given a commandment against Tyre"***
  - God would de-power Tyre and its merchant trade.
- When destruction came, it would be natural for people to try and flee to other cities.
  - If they flee to Chittim, it would be of no avail.
  - They could not outrun the God of the universe.
- Today, Chaldeans are Aramaic-speaking, Eastern Rite Catholics that are indigenous to Iraq.
  - In ancient times, these people built a huge city with towers and palaces. But the Assyrians brought it to ruin (Babylon fell in 689 BC).
- Even though Tyre was fortified with tall walls, it would not prevail against God's judgment.
- **What national or world event shocked you the most?**
- **Do you think the COVID pandemic will bring people closer to God or will people ignore God's actions?**



### **God Is Honored** (Isaiah 23:15-18)

- ***"It shall come to pass in that day, Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years ..."***
    - Seventy years indicates God's ideal timing.
    - *'the days of one king'* – seventy years was considered an ideal lifespan of time.
  - In God's perfect timing, ***"the Lord shall visit Tyre"***
    - After her time of punishment was completed, Tyre would go back into business.
  - But there is a twist. The wealth Tyre wielded before now would be used for God's glory.
    - Tyre would be *"holiness to the Lord"*
  - Tyre would support those who serve the Lord in Jerusalem. Their lucrative financial profits from merchant trade with nations would now be used to support the work of God.
  - The crucial point of Isaiah's oracle concerning Tyre is that God is in control.
    - Those who trust God should not trust in wealth or power as a source of security.
    - God is the only one we should and can trust.
- **What do people place their trust in today?**
- **How do you know God is still active in world events? Do your prayers reflect trust in God?**

### **Biblical Truth:**

***God controls the rise and fall of nations and powers.***

*The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.  
What can mere mortals do to me? Psalm 118:6*

