

# Isaiah 23:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

## Analysis

**The burden of Tyre.** Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.<sup>1</sup> Tyre, ancient Phoenician maritime power and trading empire, receives judgment. The 'ships of Tarshish' (large merchant vessels, possibly named for Tartessos in Spain, representing long-distance trade) are called to mourn—Tyre's destruction ends their profitable trade. 'No house, no entering in' indicates complete destruction—no port facilities, no market, no commercial infrastructure. The news comes 'from the land of Chittim' (Cyprus, Phoenician colony), showing how interconnected the ancient trade network was. Tyre's fall affects entire Mediterranean commercial system. This demonstrates God's sovereignty over economic systems—He can dismantle even mighty trading empires. Earthly prosperity divorced from covenant faithfulness ultimately fails.

## Historical Context

Tyre was ancient world's greatest commercial power—Phoenician shipping dominated Mediterranean trade for centuries. Located on island offshore (Old Tyre on mainland, New Tyre on island), it seemed impregnable. Yet Isaiah prophesies its fall. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for 13 years (585-572 BCE), though island portion survived. Complete fulfillment came through Alexander the Great (332 BCE), who built a causeway to the island and conquered it utterly, fulfilling Ezekiel 26's detailed prophecy. Modern archaeological site shows the causeway, now a

peninsula. Tyre never regained ancient glory—a minor town today. This demonstrates that seemingly impregnable economic powers can fall when God decrees it. Modern parallels include economic empires that seemed permanent yet collapsed—divine sovereignty extends over economies and commerce.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does Tyre's fall teach about God's sovereignty over economic systems?
2. How did Tyre's seemingly impregnable position prove insufficient against divine judgment?
3. What modern economic powers might face similar divine judgments for pride and oppression?

## Interlinear Text

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שְׁחַדְתִּי תְּרַשְׁישׁ יְשָׁאָר מִשְׁאָר אָנֹכִי זֹת הַיָּלִיל יְלֹא צָר  
The burden of Tyre Howl ye ships of Tarshish for it is laid waste  
H4853 H6865 H3213 H591 H8659 H3588 H7703

נִגְלָה כְּתִים מִבְּאָצָר מִבְּאָתָר מִבְּאָתָר כְּתִים  
so that there is no house no entering in from the land of Chittim it is revealed  
H1004 H935 H776 H3794 H1540

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## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 10:4** (Parallel theme): And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

**Isaiah 2:16** (Parallel theme): And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

**Jeremiah 25:22** (Parallel theme): And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,

**Jeremiah 47:4** (Parallel theme): Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Capthor.

**Isaiah 23:12** (Parallel theme): And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.

**Jeremiah 2:10** (Parallel theme): For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

**1 Kings 22:48** (Parallel theme): Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.

**1 Kings 10:22** (Parallel theme): For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.