

Isaiah 23:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Zidon— The title 'oppressed virgin' (ha'ashukah betulat) is bitterly ironic: Sidon the oppressor now becomes the oppressed. 'Virgin' suggests she remained unconquered through history, proud of her independence. The verb ashaq (oppress/exploit) here turns back on the oppressor—those who crushed others now experience crushing themselves. **Arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest**—Chittim (חִטִּים) refers to Cyprus, another Phoenician colony. But even in distant refuge, nuach (rest/peace) eludes them.

This restlessness of the judged parallels Cain's curse: 'a fugitive and vagabond shalt thou be in the earth' (Genesis 4:12). Those who oppressed others find no resting place. The prophet Jeremiah uses identical language about Israel's exile: 'Among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest' (Deuteronomy 28:65). Oppressors and covenant-breakers share the same fate: restless wandering, perpetual insecurity, peace forever out of reach. True rest (menucha) comes only through righteousness and submission to God—a theme Jesus echoes: 'Come unto me... and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28).

Historical Context

Phoenician colonies in Cyprus, established centuries earlier as trading posts, could not absorb or protect refugees from Tyre's destruction. The island itself fell to

various conquerors (Assyria, Persia, Alexander), offering no security. Phoenician refugees scattered across the Mediterranean, many enslaved, others assimilating into foreign cultures—a diaspora that lost its distinct identity.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does oppressing others ultimately destroy the oppressor's own peace and security?
2. What does 'restlessness' mean as a spiritual condition, and how does it manifest in those fleeing God's judgment?
3. Where do people today seek rest—and why do these refuges fail to provide true peace?

Interlinear Text

בְּמִשְׁעָקָה	הַ	לֹא	וְ	אָמַר	תֹּסֵךְ	יִפְאַת	לֹא	וְ	עַד	רֹא	לֹא	וְ	עַד	לֹא	וְ	אָמַר	
And he said	H3808	Thou shalt no more	H3254		H5750	rejoice	H5937		H6231	O thou oppressed	H1571	H8033	H3808				
virgin	H1330	daughter	H1323	of Zidon	H6721	to Chittim	H3794	arise	H6965	pass over	H5674						
לֹא	שָׁמֵן	עַבְרִי	גָּמָן	בְּתֻולָּת	בְּתַדְבֵּר	צִידָן	כְּתִים	קָרְבָּן	קָרְבָּן	רְאֵת	לֹא	שָׁמֵן	עַבְרִי	גָּמָן	בְּתֻולָּת		
there also shalt thou have no rest	H5117		H0														

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:22 (Parallel theme): And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

Isaiah 47:1 (Parallel theme): Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

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